SPORTS / A16
Federer eyes place in final 8 of Wimbledon

WORLD / A21
New clashes in Iran; row with Britain escalates

WORLD / A22
Jackson had faint pulse when found, says doctor

ACROSS / A15
Small miners ruin N. Vizcaya mountain

Army ousts Honduras president

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS—THE MILitary ousted President Manuel Zelaya on Sunday, capping months of tensions over his efforts to lift presidential term limits, in the first coup d'etat in Central America since the end of the Cold War.

Soldiers stormed the presidential palace in the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa early Sunday, disarmed the presidential guard, seized Zelaya and put him on a plane to Costa Rica.

Zelaya, a leftist aligned with President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, angrily de-

ARMY/ A4

Don't seek treatment if you're not sick—DOH

By Christian V. Esguerra

"IF YOU'RE NOT SICK, don't insist that you are."

The piece of advice came from an irate Department of Health (DOH) official, who

DON'T SEEK/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, June 30, 2009 • 5 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 202 P18 website www.inquirer.net

Back to manual voting

RP partner quits consortium; poll automation in peril

By Kristine L. Alave

THE FILIPINO PARTNER HAS WITHDRAWN from the consortium that won the bidding for next year's computerized balloting, raising the possibility that elections will be conducted manually as before, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) announced yesterday.

"We may have to go manual," Comelec Chair Jose Melo told reporters after a 10-minute meeting with officials of Total Information Management Corp. (TIM), the local counterpart of the consortium led by the Barbados-based Smartmatic International.

Melo said that TIM president Jose Mari Sarabia told him that TIM was pulling out of the partnership with Smartmatic, citing unspecified "irreconcilable differences."

However, a source privy to the Comelec's automation efforts said that lack of funds and unpreparedness prompted TIM's withdrawal.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of compromising his role in the initiative, said that TIM needed an additional P300 million to meet its P900-million share as a partner.

"Unless TIM can raise the amount, the joint venture cannot push through and they cannot be issued the proper papers by the Securities and Exchange Commission," the source said.

However, the source noted that TIM could easily enter into a loan to obtain this amount "since the contract is already a sure shot, which makes us wonder what 'irreconcilable differences' mean."

The Inquirer contacted TIM, but

BACK/ A4

"WE MAY have to go manual," says Comelec Chair Jose Melo after the withdrawal of the local counterpart of Barbados-based Smartmatic International, which won the bidding for the computerized balloting in 2010. Manual means going back to the tedious counting of the ballots which is open to wholesale cheating (the notorious dagdag-bawas).

FILE PHOTOS

AUTOMATIC counting machine from Smartmatic.

FILE PHOTO

Firm's pullout very suspicious, says Gordon

By the Inquirer Staff

SEN. RICHARD GORDON YESterday said he found "very suspicious" the pullout of Total Information Management Corp. (TIM) as partner of Smartmatic in the P7.2-billion project to automate the 2010 elections.

"Is there somebody forcing partnership with Smartmatic or is this a deliberate attempt to torpedo the automation process so there will be cheating as usual?" asked Gordon, who has been vocal on his desire for poll automation to happen in next year's polls.

He said that prior to TIM's pullout, there was a public relations campaign to oppose the project.

He said that this latest development seemed to show that "some people are playing with the fate of democracy in our country."

"There is a group in Comelec (Commission on Elections) that doesn't want automation. It must be too powerful ... The government is too weak. It has no moral and legal stamina to do, implement what it should implement," Gordon told reporters.

"I will be devastated if full automation will not push through. I might call a blue ribbon hear-

FIRM'S/ A4

Come back, testify, CHR tells Fil-Am activist

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights (CHR) yesterday urged Filipino-American activist Melissa Roxas to return to the Philippines, saying a recent inspection of a military camp tended to validate her physical description of the place where she was tortured in May.

CHR Chair Leila de Lima said she and two other CHR commissioners and investigators went to Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija on June 10 for a "surprise inspection" of the Army camp to "validate certain allegations."

"Melissa said that she heard sounds and noises of planes, gunfire, and hammering within a certain perimeter. At Fort Magsaysay, we saw an airstrip, a building that was being constructed and firing ranges also within a certain perimeter," De Lima said.

In her affidavit, Roxas said that she was blindfolded most of the time and that in the two days she spent in a jail cell, she heard construction activities, gun firing "as though in a firing range," and planes taking off and landing.

She also heard guns blazing.

Roxas, 31, a member of the US chapter of the Bayan mili-

COME BACK/ A4

Toothless rights body would hurt Asean group

By Leila B. Salaverria

BANGKOK—AS THE TARGET date for launching the Asean human rights body (AHRB) nears, civil society groups have warned that giving it of watchdog powers would erode the credibility of the regional organization.

The warning came amid concerns over Burma's (Myanmar's) renewed crackdown on democracy fighter Aung San Suu Kyi and Thailand's refusal to accept thousands of Burmese refugees fleeing from military rule.

About 200 civil society groups and individuals have endorsed a letter urging the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to give the AHRB the power to investigate complaints of abuses, conduct country visits and review the human rights situation in the region.

The letter, addressed to a

TOOTHLESS/ A4

Maguindanao roadside blast kills 2; cops find bomb in QC

By Ryan D. Rosario
Inquirer Mindanao

DATU SAUDI AMPATUAN, Maguindanao—An improvised explosive device (IED) ripped through a roadside here yesterday, killing two men having an early morning coffee at the Bai Lamang Bakery and Coffee Shop and wounding eight others, police said.

The fatalities in the 6:15 a.m. blast at Barangay Kitango were identified as tobacco vendor Malempunah Nunokan, 65, and gasoline retailer Datong Mansor Pacheck, 29.

Wounded were Hadji Mansor Haj Rashak, 80; Tato Mamanasal, 45; Kimong Dicong, 30; Moosa Muna, 42; shop owner Hadji Fatima Haj Kaka, 46, and her husband Ibno Abdulkadir, 55. Hadji Abas Guiamdalag, 61, and Naima Omar, 33. Most of them were taken to hospitals in Cotabato City.

The blast site was some five meters away from the shop where the two killed were having coffee.

According to police investigators, the bomb was planted inside a bulged drum used as garbage bin, tearing it apart.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Police said they were still investigating who could be behind the bomb attack.

An Army explosive and ordnance personnel said the device was similar to one that blasted a

MAGUINDANAO/ A4

ARMY troops patrol the national highway in Maguindanao after a bomb explodes, killing two men and wounding eight others at Barangay Kitango in Datu Saudi Ampatuan on Monday.

ROEL T. PELEGRINA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

PDI donates e-newsrooms to UP

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TWO CLASSROOMS OF THE University of the Philippines' College of Mass Communication (UMC) in Diliman, Quezon City, have undergone a P2-million, multimedia makeover courtesy of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Inquirer president and CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez yesterday formally opened the Philippine Daily Inquirer Electronic Newsroom. Her brother Paolo Prieto, president of Inquirer.net, inaugurated the la-

FOR DONATES/ A4

INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez (right) and UP journalism department chair Rachel Khar test one of 17 new computers.

Radio broadcaster shot dead in South

By Franklin A. Caligoid
Inquirer Mindanao

BUTUAN CITY—ANOTHER hard-hitting radio commentator was shot and killed by a lone gunman in Butuan, Agusan del Sur, on Saturday, police said.

Jonathan Ibasheres, a broadcaster for dxPM Prime Beat, was the sixth media practitioner to have been killed in the country since January and the 67th since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in 2001.

Although reports reaching police identified Ibasheres as a "hopeful" or enamel member of Barangay Poblacion, he was popular in the town for his fierce commentaries and tirades against wrongdoings in his community and in the local government.

Ibasheres "is well-known in Barangay for his daily morning commentaries," said PO2 Allan Cuizo, who is investigating the attack.

The broadcaster was drinking inside a restaurant in the town proper when a man wear-

RADIO/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY: Mostly cloudy skies are expected over Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon with isolated rains in the afternoon or evening.

Area	Weather	Area	Weather
Manila	Partly cloudy	Baguio	Partly cloudy
Dagupan	Partly cloudy	Iba	Partly cloudy
Laoag	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Cabanatuan	Partly cloudy	Dipolog	Mostly cloudy
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy
Tagbilaran	Partly cloudy	Davao	Mostly cloudy

Source: Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa)

Also in this section: Sun Life 2009 MVP Golf Challenge results (Sports) • Sun Life 2009 MVP Golf Challenge results (Sports)

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail at: secondfrontpage@inq7.net Website: www.inquirer.net/sfp

6/13 SUERTRES

1st	2nd	3rd
2	5	8

(All in exact order)

FOUR DIGIT

1st	2nd	3rd	4th
5	7	6	6

6/13 6D

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
25	4	18	1	8	2	3

(All in exact order)

1st	2nd	3rd
3	6	7

6/13 4D

1st	2nd	3rd	4th
0	2	1	7

HEGALOTTO 6/45

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1	4	0	10	18	45

P28,934,046.00

Nothing to Palace coup talk–Biazon

By Christine O. Avendaño

CHECKING WITH HIS MILITARY SOURCES, SEN. Rodolfo Biazon yesterday said there were "no actual movements" to indicate that a Makeshift Commander Cory Aquino coup, or a so-called Oplan August Moon, was in the works.

Rumors of such a plan have been circulating, raising fears that the administration was planning to position military generals friendly to the Arroyo administration in sensitive police and military posts by August in preparation for a coup that would backstop her bid to amend the Constitution before the end of the year.

Biazon, a former chief of staff, believed the rumors could be "related to the rivalry between Philippine Military Class 1976 and Class '78." The former are currently in top positions while members of Class '78—the class that adopted President Macapagal-Arroyo—are beginning to enter leadership posts.

Biazon said scenarios were being weaved by young officers that "professionalist" soldiers and one "not inclined to see the political line" of the administration.

"There was talk that even Philippine National Police (PNP) acting General Jesus Versoza would be replaced by SCIPO chief Supt. Nobel Rondiz Class '78, Biazon said.

Earlier, Biazon denied rumors that Class '78 entertained thoughts of joining a wayward military coup. "We would not risk our families for that...we remain apolitical," he said.

Int. Pacific Lacson, a PMA alumnus and former chief of the Philippine National Police, said he had never heard of Oplan August Moon.

But Lacson warned that anyone who incited such a plan would be "inserting political illusions, if not sudden death."

"Class '78 may be scrapping most of the sensitive positions both in the AFP and the PNP but other upper and lower classes of the PMA, integrees and reserved officers and PMPA graduates will not allow themselves to be used, nor to mortician civil society and the people themselves who have had enough of years of misrule under Mr. Arroyo," Lacson said in a text message.

Biazon said that those fearing Oplan August Moon reports could be those who do not like the administration and it could be aimed at creating "more sort of confusion."

Sen. Pemarin Sotto, on the other hand, said the administration move likely was behind this and not the opposition, which is preparing for the 2010 polls.

He said it was possible that this would be the third option of the Arroyo administration—the first two being the failed People Initiating Charter change or making sure that there was failure of elections.

Factsheet said administration attempts to amend the Constitution through the House of Representatives have failed. "Even if the House constitutes a constituent assembly without the Senate, lawmakers there are still short of the needed three-fourths vote," he said.

Earlier, Ifrandam Arroyo's national security adviser, Norberto Gonzales, floated the idea of forming a revolutionary "transitory government" composed of current Church and state leaders to amend the Constitution and put to electoral exhaust before next year's presidential polls.

Gonzales said he would not just dismiss rumors of Oplan August Moon because "the problem of any outgoing administration is an exit plan."

"Just hope the current administration thinks up an exit plan that is within the legal framework, not something illegal or violent, said the senator to Filipinos.

Release report on bid rigging, public works chief dared

By Marlon Ramos

AN ALLIANCE OF PUBLIC transport groups and motorists' rights advocates yesterday dared Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to make public the report of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) that investigated the reported bid-rigging in World Bank-funded local road projects.

The Road Users Protection Advocates (Rupa) posed the challenge even as Ebdane threatened to suspend 156 contractors from participating in the bidding process for government infrastructure projects.

In a statement, Rupa questioned Ebdane's alleged arbitrariness in keeping the contents of the report secret. It has been more than a month since the panel concluded its inquiry, the group said.

"What's keeping Secretary Ebdane from releasing the report? Is he trying to protect somebody?" As taxpayers, we have every right to know the results of the investigation," Rupa said.

The Laguna-based group said Ebdane's actions were in "stark contrast" to his public posturing as an advocate of reforms and transparency in the DPWH, long marked among the most corrupt government agencies.

Ebdane is a former chief of the Philippine National Police.

"If he's really after public accountability, Ebdane must release the report and summon those unscrupulous DPWH officials and contractors," the group said.

In an earlier interview, Public Works Undersecretary Rafael Yabut explained that Ebdane was still consulting with other senior DPWH officials regarding the recommendations made by the investigating panel.

The two-man panel to get the reaction of Ebdane, but he did not answer the calls and text messages sent to his mobile phone.

A DPWH statement said that 156 contractors may be barred from joining public bidding for government-funded road projects after they failed to answer subpoenas from the DPWH, the statement said.

"[We] are still in the process of vetting into the records because some of them have not responded to our letters requiring them to show cause why they should not be suspended," Ebdane was quoted as saying.

There were 216 companies initially found to have violated provisions of the Government Procurement Reform Act. Of these, he said 569 companies answered their summons.

Among the violations cited were the companies' failure to complete the infrastructure projects as stated in the contract.

Some of the contractors, the statement said, gave "unacceptable" reasons for not finishing their projects "such as having no engineering staff to complete the bid, claiming the projects were not profitable and complaining about traffic congestion in project sites."

Ebdane had earlier suspended 63 small contractors from participating in the bidding for DPWH-financed road projects.

Yabut said the move was not a clear message to all the contractors and other parties doing business with the DPWH in particular and government in general to follow the law or face sanctions and suspension or even lose their business," he said.

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Division Head - Procurement
Total Gas, Inc.

Other CPSM passers (without photo):
Rodolfo P. Ramos, C.P.M.
Ramon R. Carrera, C.P.M., DEM

Cory takes a bite, improves slightly

By Nala Ager
(NQ, INGS.ph)

FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON AQUINO's condition has improved slightly and she has taken her first meal—a chicken sandwich—since being confined in a hospital last week, her son Sen. Benigno Aquino III said.

"Yesterday (Sunday) I think, she requested a chicken sandwich. We see that as a good sign," the young Aquino said in a phone interview.

"That was the first thing she asked for. I was relieved after that," he said.

While Mr. Aquino's nutrition level was low, her condition was improving, the senator said.

"Medyo umuunlad na ang kanyang kalagayan. Her condition has improved slightly. But we don't know yet when she will be released from the hospital. We have to be sure that her appetite is back," he said.

Mr. Aquino was brought to the hospital on Sunday last week due to a poor appetite. She underwent surgery for colon cancer in April.

The former president stays most of the day, but sometimes she feels pain," Senator Aquino said.

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Gov't appeals junking of rap against Estrada

GOVERNMENT LAWYERS HAVE ASKED the Sandiganbayan antigraft court to reconsider its order dismissing the last perjury case against deposed president and convicted plunderer Joseph Estrada and others him to freely travel abroad.

In a motion for reconsideration, the Office of the Special Prosecutor and the court's resolution, issued about two weeks ago, unduly acted on Estrada's motion to lift the hold-departure order against him and should not have dismissed the last perjury case.

"It is thus very clear that what was being resolved by this honorable court was the motion to lift the hold-departure order and not the dismissal of Criminal Case No. 26564," it said.

The antigraft court convicted Estrada of plunder in September 2007 and sentenced him to 40 years to prison. The court also acquitted Estrada in one of two perjury cases.

Estrada never served the prison term, however, as President Macapagal-Arroyo granted him a pardon barely a month after.

Last month, Estrada petitioned the Sandiganbayan Special Division to lift the hold-departure order against him. The court granted the motion, citing the pardon he received and his acquittal in the perjury case. The court also dismissed the second perjury case against Estrada, Criminal Case No. 26565, ruling that the issue had become moot.

The prosecution argued, however, that Estrada should have first filed a motion seeking the dismissal of the case against him before the court would act on it.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Palace: No need for GMA to justify foreign trips

By Christine V. Esguerra, Jerome Aning and Alkisar W. Lopez

THE INITIAL DRAFT IS READY, BUT Malacañang yesterday said there was no need for President Macapagal-Arroyo to justify her foreign trips when she delivers her final State of the Nation Address (Sona) next month.

Much of the explaining came from her six spokespersons and in newspaper advertisements.

The Palace defended the President's latest four-nation swing through Japan, Colombia, Brazil and Hong Kong, saying it netted over $6 billion in investments, development assistance and jobs.

A full-page ad with the head, "Mile for Progress," appeared in newspapers yesterday detailing the benefits from the 16-day trip.

The print ads had been appearing since last week when critics took notice of the President's frequent foreign travels. Sen. Francis Escudero said the government had spent at least P3 billion on at least 30 trips made by Ms Arroyo since 2001.

Deputy spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo said yesterday the figures being floated by critics on the President's travel expenses were "exaggerated." But she did not disclose how much had been spent on the trips.

Malacañan Assistant Executive Secretary Ricardo Saludo said the President was not obliged to explain her trips.

"I don't like to make comparisons between my trips (when I was president) and hers," Saludo told reporters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2 after welcoming Ms Arroyo.

Saludo said Ms Arroyo was not making her very own trips. He said the President was merely doing her job.

Ramon Jr. stressed that he was not running for any post in 2010, following reports that Mr Arroyo was planning to run for Congress after her presidential term expires.

"I've already been there. I don't need that," he said, adding that he was content to be a private citizen and statesman who continues to serve the Filipinos.

Malacañang should give an accounting of actual investments, development assistance and jobs generated by President Arroyo's foreign travels since 2001, United Opposition (UNO) president Jerome Bunag said yesterday.

"Which of these commitments and pledges of development assistance were fulfilled? How many jobs were actually generated? How many Filipinos were actually employed in the countries she visited?" said Bunag, who is also student regent.

He noted that in late 2007 visit to China, Malacañang went quick to announce that Ms Arroyo's 12-hour trip netted investments totalling nearly $1 billion.

It was also there that the President witnessed the signing of the $325-million national broadband deal with ZTE Corp. With a report from Cliff Caburnagan

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Don't run, JPE tells GMA; run, says Imelda

By Joey Salviota
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—SENATE President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to abandon any plan of running for a seat in Congress, contending that the vast powers she enjoys would give her an unfair advantage over her opponents.

"If the President is prohibited from running for reelection to avoid the possible use of the vast powers available to her under the laws of the land and our Constitution, how much more if she run to a political district? That is why I am discouraging her from running," Enrile told reporters here.

For her part, former First Lady Imelda Marcos said here that President Arroyo had all the right to run for any position other than the presidency.

Marcos said that the President had done so many good things for the country, especially for the people of Visayas.

"Just like me when I returned in 1991, I ran for a congressional seat here in Leyte and I won overwhelmingly," Marcos said on Sunday evening.

Enrile was among the senators invited by Tacloban City Mayor Alfred Romualdez to attend the Sinigang Festival, one of the highlights of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the city.

Enrile said that there would be no doubt that the President, if she run for a congressional seat, could use her position to win, giving her opponents little chance.

Ms Arroyo, who was to step down in 2010, had been reported to be interested in contesting a congressional seat in Pampanga in order to maintain a hold on power.

Enrile said University of the Philippines professor and top-ten columnist Randy David, who announced that he would fight the President for the seat, would be a worthy congressional candidate.

But he likened David's guest columns to "adventures" bound to fail.

Asked if she would personally campaign for Ms Arroyo in Pampanga, Marcos said she would not like to be "presumptuous" considering her now "very limited resources and influence."

GMA hometown got bulk of funds, charges solon

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has visited Pampanga more times than any other province during the bulk of her economic stimulus fund trips to her hometown and the provinces of Region III in which Pampanga belongs.

Ari Yuzon party-list Rep. Florencio Noel yesterday said this showed disparity of state funds that has only benefited provinces, such as the Visayas-speaking provinces in Eastern Visayas, with "more crumbs."

In a phone interview, Noel said the four-month employment generated data from the Department of Public Works and Highways was "eye-opener."

He said the provinces with high incidences of poverty and unemployment were not given priority in the distribution of economic stimulus funds.

"These areas are badly in need of a fresh job infusion. We thought they would get the bulk of the jobs that would be generated from infrastructure spending," Noel said.

DPWH data showed that Region III—composed of Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Zambales—recorded 47,503 new construction-related jobs from January to April this year.

The figure was twice the number of jobs in the second biggest beneficiary, Region IV—composed of Quezon City and Tagaytay City and—which recorded 22,800 new jobs.

Noel said the bias in dispensing jobs was more pronounced in April when the country's poorest provinces—in Region VIII, VII, IV-A and Cordillera administrative Region (CAR)—were given only new jobs while Region III got 7,691 new jobs.

"Compared to Region III, where the hometown of the President is located, the other regions need all the help they can get from government," he said.

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PHOENIX

Correction

IN THE JUNE 29 ISSUE, an article on Page A1E—"The sa' PGU eurocentric Alexis duo"—distorted the Jose Alonso in a former surname of the honoree. Alonso is still an Ingcoco surname.

Army ousts Honduras president

From page A1

summoned the coup as illegal. Still in his pajamas, Zelaya spoke at a news conference at the airport in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Later Sunday, the Honduran Congress voted Zelaya out of office and replaced him with the president of the legislature, Roberto Micheletti.

The United American nation is now torn between two presidents—Zelaya who is still legally recognized by world bodies and Micheletti who is supported by the legislature, judiciary and military.

The Honduran military offered no public explanation for its actions, but the Supreme Court issued a statement saying that the military had acted to defend the law against "those who had publicly spoken out and acted against the Constitution's provisions."

The source of Zelaya's ire is the culmination of a battle that had been simmering for months over his proposal for constitutional referendum, which were to be taken place on Sunday.

Zelaya had called the referendum in defiance of the judiciary and the legislature. Opponents said the referendum was an attempt by Zelaya to remain in power after his term ends on Jan. 27 next year.

The Honduran Constitution limits presidents to a single 4-year term, and opponents feared Zelaya would use the referendum results as try to run again, just as Chavez amended the Venezuelan Constitution to be able to seek reelection repeatedly.

Deep concern over coup

Expressing deep concern over the coup, US Press Secretary Robert Charles called on Honduran officials "to respect democratic norms, the rule of law and the tenets of the Inter-American Democratic Charter."

"Any other leg tensions must be resolved peacefully through dialogue free from any outside interference," Obama said in a statement.

His quick condemnation offered a sharp contrast with the actions of the Bush administration, which in 2002 offered a rapid, tacit endorsement of a short-lived coup against Chavez.

In a statement, the Organization of American States (OAS) called for the return to power of the democratically elected but largely unpopular Zelaya, saying it would not recognize any other government.

The United Nations and governments across Latin America also said Zelaya must be allowed to resume office.

Chavez at center stage

Presidents from around Latin America were gathering in Nicaragua for meetings on Monday to resolve the first military overthrow of a Central American government in 16 years.

Once again, Chavez took center stage, meeting the deposed or a rebellion by the regime's point.

"If the oligarchies break the rules of the game as they have done, the people have the right to resistance and combat, and we are with them," he said in the Nicaraguan capital Managua.

The Venezuelan leader vowed to overthrow Micheletti who, in turn, accused any outside interference and declared a two-night curfew.

Micheletti said the military acted on orders from the courts, and Zelaya's ouster was carried out "to defend respect for the law and the principles of democracy." He threatened to jail Zelaya and put him on trial if he returned.

Micheletti also hit back at the Venezuelan president, saying "unhealthy ties Barack Obama and reach Ion Hugo Chavez, has any right to threaten this country."

Safe return

Two senior Obama administration officials told reporters on Sunday that US diplomats were working to evacuate Zelaya's safe return.

The senior officials said the Obama administration to resist days but warned Honduran power players, including the military, that the United States would not support a coup, dou-

HONDURAS President Manuel Zelaya (left) is welcomed by Venezuela President Hugo Chavez (right) after the former's arrival in Nicaragua on Monday. The Honduran military ousted and exiled Zelaya on Sunday in Central America's first military coup since the Cold War. AFP

doze military leaders, however, stopped taking the calls of US officials.

At his news conference in Costa Rica, Zelaya said soldiers seized him in his pajamas at gunpoint in what he called a "coup" and a "kidnapping."

"I want to return to my country. I am president of Honduras," Zelaya said before traveling to Managua on one of Chavez's planes for regional meetings of Central American leaders and Chavez's leftist ally Daniel Ortega, known as Al-ba.

Zelaya's call for civil disobedience and peaceful resistance appeared to gain only modest support in Honduras, where a few hundred people turned out at government buildings to see soldiers and chant "Viva!"

Cabinet members detained

Some of Zelaya's Cabinet members were detained by soldiers following his ouster, according to former government official Armando Dantzler.

Presidents of Congress, a rights group, said Johnny Lagos and Cesar Hana had died in a shootout with soldiers trying to detain him.

Armored military vehicles with machine guns rolled through the streets of the Honduran capital, as soldiers seized the presidential palace. No other incidents of violence were reported.

On Sunday afternoon, Congress voted to accept what it said was Zelaya's letter of resignation, with even the president's allies turning against him.

As leader of Congress mandated to fill any vacancy in the presidency, Micheletti was sworn in to serve until Zelaya's term ends.

Micheletti belongs to Zelaya's Liberal Party, but he opposed the president's move to call a referendum.

Micheletti acknowledged that he had not spoken to any Latin American heads of state but said, "I'm sure that 80 to 90 percent of the Honduran population is happy with what happened today."

Wide support abroad

Despite his unpopularity at home, Zelaya appeared to have wide support abroad.

The OAS approved a resolution on Sunday demanding "the immediate, safe and unconditional return of the constitutional president, Manuel Zelaya."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the coup and urged "the immediate return of the democratically elected representatives of the country."

The Rio Group, which is made up of 23 nations from the hemisphere, issued a statement condemning "the coup d'etat" and calling for Zelaya's "immediate and unconditional reinstatement to his duties."

Japanese President Yukio Hatoyama, however, canceled his visit to Honduras, one of 25 countries that still recognize the self-governing island in Asia.

Coups were common in Central America for several decades reaching back to the 1970s, but Sunday's ouster was the first military power grab in Latin America since a failed 2002 coup against Chavez.

The coup against Zelaya was the first in Central America since military officials forced President Jorge Serrano of Guatemala to step down in 1993 after he tried to dissolve Congress and suspend the Constitution. —Reports from New York Times News Service and AP

Radio broadcaster shot dead in South

From page A1

ing a heated shot him in the head with a .45 cal. pistol at around 7 p.m., Camus told the Inquirer.

The killer fled on a motorcycle, he added.

Police clueless

"We are still determining the motive for the killing, whether it was related to his work as barangay councilor or work in the media because he was not reported as a radio practitioner," said Senior Supt. Steven Rajeris, spokesperson of the regional police.

A police source, however, said Rendaveen was embroiled in a dispute over a controversial construction project in his barangay.

He was said to be running for a seat in the municipal council in next year's elections.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists earlier this year said the Philippines was among several countries where media workers were murdered with impunity.

A total of 139 Filipino journalists have been killed since the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos was overthrown by a military-backed people's uprising in 1986.

Other fatalities

This year, five other journalists, two of them working in radio stations, have been killed.

On Jan. 22, Rolando Alibas, 39, a Mar-

lin peace worker and radio commentator of the CM. Radyo Ulag was shot in the head by two motorcycle-riding persons as he drove his small van in Cotabato City. He died immediately.

Another radio broadcaster, Ernie Bollo, 52, was shot dead by two masked men on the way to his daily talk program on radio dxSS-AM in Misamis Occidental on Feb. 23.

Witnesses said Bollo had just dropped off his partner, Lipayo, at a waiting shed when two motorcycle-riding men in helmets appeared and attacked him.

The victims also died weekend commentator and handled programming at dxRS-FM in Oroquieta City.

On June 3, tabloid reporter Ajax Yagao was killed in a shootout while covering a drug raid in Real.

On June 9, Crispin Pena, 66, was stabbed several times in his house in Cardona, Rizal, after finishing his radio program "Sa Totoo Lang" over dxCO-Inar FM.

Pena, who was also a farmer who governor of the province, was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

On June 12, Jessano Castillo, 45, a cabled correspondent of Mindanao, Mindanao, was driving his motorcycle along the highway in Davao Oriental for some time by two men who were also on a Honda motorcycle without license plates. He died at the hospital. With reports from Inquirer Research and AFP

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Bring it on, 'Iggy' tells opposing labor group

By Jerome Aning

NINTH OCCIDENTAL FIFTH DISTRICT Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo Jr. yesterday said he was ready to take on the party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa (PM), which is poised to challenge him for his congressional seat in next year's elections.

"This is a free country. I encourage them to run and see for themselves para magkaalaman na kung sino talaga ang gusto ng mga tao (so that we might see who the people really support)," President Macapagal-Arroyo's brother-in-law said in a statement on the keyboard.

PM's Negros chapter said the other day it would field a candidate against Arroyo in an "election showdown" (laban sa eleksiyon) in 2010.

The worker's group identified the Arroyos as "negos baron," who have dominated the several Philippine Island's politics for more than a century.

Arroyo noted that PM did not win a single seat in the 2007 party-list election.

The congressman advised PM "to just concentrate on the welfare of workers, whom they claim they represent as a party-list organization."

He said that for years the last two elections "mysteriously" said that he had the support of all the mayors and barangay officials in the fifth district. The district includes Himamaylan City and the towns of Binalbagan, Hinigaran, Isabela, La Castellana and Kabankalan City.

Arroyo also said his track record and performance "speak for themselves" and he believed that the people of Negros "know better."

He said PM was only riding on the media hype triggered by University of the Philippines professor and known columnist Randy David's announcement that he would run in Pampanga against President Arroyo should she decide to run for Congress in 2010.

Back to manual voting

From page A1

the company dubbed comtech.

The Smartmatic-TIM group was awarded the contract after a months-long bidding process that saw seven election computer-system companies in the P13.6-billion project.

The group made a P7.12-billion bid and won the right to lease 82,200 counting machines that would allow the Comelec to complete the canvassing of votes in two days instead of weeks under the manual system.

Project in serious jeopardy

Abda said he expressed his disappointment at the TIM officials during the meeting in his office and denounced in the criminal and civil charges against them.

"I told them that the elections must push through. If you with draw, you are picking your joy ous interest above that of the national interest," he said.

With TIM out of the picture, Abda said the poll automation project was in serious jeopardy, although he stressed that the Comelec would continue to look for other options to pursue the electronic voting project.

"We will study if it's legally acceptable if the Comelec and Smartmatic come up," Abda said.

He also said the Comelec would explore the possibility of having a second bidding process to allow the losing bidders to complete their definitions.

Smartmatic, Abda said, can join forces a new joint venture with another company because it is against national procurement laws.

No justifiable reason

Ferdinand Rabaan, the Comelec's chief legal officer who conducted the bidding, said that TIM did not present a justifiable reason for its withdrawal. "There is none. Zero."

Rabaan also said it would be unlikely for Comelec to conduct another bidding, citing lack of time. The project, he noted, has already been delayed by more than a month.

Boss of TIM's pullout from the automation project appeared to have caught Smartmatic officials by surprise.

Cesar Flores, Smartmatic spokesperson said: "We have a partner and hour ago. We are waiting for them to come from somewhere."

Jose Villa, Smartmatic project manager, said the company was in contact with TIM and had not given up on the deal with Comelec.

"We are continuing conversations in order to ensure that the Comelec contract is signed," Villa said.

The contract had been due for signing on Friday, but was postponed to June 29 after reports surfaced in last week's Senate hearing on the project and the consortium's capitalization.

Criminally liable

Abda said that the Comelec would not TIM for jeopardizing the automated election.

"We will see to it that they will be criminally liable. We had a briefing. It's not right that they withdrew after being awarded. We are a constitutional body and they're saying with us," he said.

Rabaan said the Comelec could file a host of criminal, civil, and administrative cases against TIM officials.

TIM, he noted, could be held liable for withdrawal of bid, re luctantly accept an award, or enter into a contract with the government without justifiable cause.

Malcolm said the Comelec would look into TIM's incorporation papers if they have connections or may have been influenced by groups and personalities against automated elections.

Comelec officials said TIM officials risked fines and imprisonment when they backed out of the contract.

Certificate of registration

The announcement that TIM had left the partnership was made a few hours after Melo ordered the suspension of the contract negotiations with Smartmatic-TIM due to its failing transferring voters' names to other precincts and delaying the arrival of ballot boxes.

"Who is the appointing authority? It is the mayor or the governor. He is level the playing field and preserve the independence of the Comelec and he is not to be suspected of being biased, especially in times of elections. It must not allow the services of the said employees," Melo said.

The Comelec adopted Resolution No. 06-0257 in March 2006, which allows casual and regular employees of LGUs to perform detailed and highly technical work in Comelec field offices, but not political or election duties.

In response to the Congress proposal, the Comelec has suggested putting a cap on how many regular employees would be trained and that the selection would be made by the Comelec and not the LGU. —DJC, Cabacungan Jr.

IN THIS file photo, Comelec Chair Jose Melo (right) congratulates Smartmatic-TIM's representatives (from left) Jose Mari Antonio, Antonio Magpia and Cesar Flores before the issuance of notice of awards at the Comelec office in Manila early this month. —ALVIN KASIG

Bar LGU workers from election duty, House poll body urges Comelec

THE HOUSE OF REPRESEN tatives committee on suffrage and electoral reforms wants the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to bar employees from provincial capitols and municipal and city halls from performing election duties.

Lanao del Sur Rep. Omar U. Mahadzar is optimistic that his Resolution No. 941, urging the Comelec to revoke its Resolution No. 06-0835 allowing casual or regular employees of local governments until 11:00 to register the Comelec field offices, would be endorsed favorably once Congress resumes its session.

In a statement, Mahadzar said: "Just allowing governors and mayors to deploy their employees for key Comelec duty for the 2010 elections would create a "dangerous situation" because the incumbent officials could open the election watchdog.

He said a number of dirty tricks could be carried out by the biased employees, including "padding" voters' lists, carrying out premature campaigns and personalities against automated elections.

Comelec officials said TIM officials risked fines and imprisonment when they backed out of the contract.

Certificate of registration

The announcement that TIM had left the partnership was made a few hours after Melo ordered the suspension of the contract negotiations with Smartmatic-TIM due to its failure to submit its incorporation papers.

Melo said the joint venture's certificate of registration from the Securities and Exchange Commission was important because it would establish the legality of the partnership between Smartmatic and TIM.

"If there is no such document, who are we signing the contract with?" Melo said. "There it is: we are talking to a ghost." With a report from Cathy Rasmussen

Firm's pullout very suspicious, says Gordon

From page A1

ing on this matter," he said, adding that the failure of the project would mean a violation of the law.

"There is a mandate that we have to go automation. There are many Bandoni's houses that will be opened if it does not happen," he said, speaking in English and Filipino.

It appears that there is no intention to push this through. Maybe they are following the administration threat that it would not happen."

Prepare for manual vote

Sen. Panfilo Bandoni said TIM's withdrawal was "disturbing" and emphasized "the need to scrutinize the personalities behind the groups to whom the Comelec has awarded the contract for the automation."

In a statement, Escudero said: "It is fortunate, however, that this problem has cropped up this early, while the Comelec is still in a position to address the problem. It is quite incumbent upon the Comelec to find a way—within the parameters of the law—to coordinate implementation of poll automation, such as plan-making poll automation in two highly urbanized areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao—which it failed to do when it awarded the contract to Smartmatic-TIM.

"Should the Comelec determine that poll automation is now unfeasible given time constraints, it should now prepare itself for the manual implementation of the elections. What is important ... is that the elections—manual or automated—are clean, honest, transparent, and accurately reflect the will of the people.

Automation now unlikely

Benjamin de Villa, chair of the poll watchdog group Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, said she was "saddened" by the news of events.

"This should be investigated," she said.

Lawyer Rizza Bellanes said that whatever reason Smartmatic's partner had for backing out, it had to be big because the contract was worth the shouldering "substantial" liabilities.

"They would have liabilities to submit to incorporation because they already submitted documentary to the bidding process," Bellanes said in a phone interview.

He also said contestants automation was unlikely to happen. The Comelec's best option is to announce elections in glitch areas, and then opt for nationwide automation in 2013, the lawyers added. —RECO reports from Christine D. Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubay, Kristine L. Alave, Leila B. Salaverria

Maguindanao roadside blast kills 2; cops find bomb in QC

From page A1

garbage dump on Saturday but caused no injuries.

Army troops deployed to secure the area where they had recovered a second explosive device.

MILF denies involvement

Eid Kabalu, spokesperson for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, denied MILF guerrillas were involved.

"Villagers have soldiers assist in the area at dawn and there was an explosion several hours later," Kabalu told reporters by telephone.

In Quezon City police found a package containing a homemade bomb at the grounds of the Department of Agriculture (DA) rendering a day after an IED (make) minor damage at the Office of the Ombudsman but hurt no one.

The incidents are under investigation, but Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno yesterday directed the Philippine National Police to ensure the families are safe, according to his spokesperson, Rabin Hernandez.

Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, PNP spokesperson, declined to speculate on those behind the two incidents. "Let's first see through the signature of the improvised explosive devices," he said.

Chief Supt. Elmer San Diego, Quezon City police director, said his men would conduct an inspection of public buildings in the area but downplayed the non-incidents.

"In the Ombudsman, threats are pretty regular. Yes, there are responders who are not happy with the outcome of decisions. And there are also regular protesters at the DA as well," he said.

No security threats

Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, Metro Manila police director, said there were no security threats to the capital. "We even do evaluations. But there was no truth to such claims."

At Monday morning's flag-raising ceremony, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez urged employees to carry on with their work.

"We are treating this as a serious threat and we are intending every form of cooperation possible with the police," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap. With reports from Julie M. Aurelio, Inves Quintoncito, Alvin Gutierrez Uzdiaj, Rizal D. Obinnaida and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Is there a plan to create atmosphere of instability?

By Michael Lim Ubay

WERE THE BOMB BLASTS THAT ROCKED the Office of the Ombudsman in Quezon City and Davs Saudi Arabassan in Maguindanao part of a plan to create an atmosphere of instability?

This disturbing question was posed yesterday by Sen. Panfilo Pangilinan following the deadly bomb attack in Mindanao and the minor blast and discoveries of explosive devices in the Philippine capital.

In a series of text messages, Pangilinan, a member of the minority bloc in the Senate, asked if the government is find the culprits and place them behind bars, "lest it be accused of being behind these acts to create the atmosphere of instability and chaos."

"This may be the handiwork of people out to derail the nation's march towards a smooth and democratic transfer of power in 2010," the senator said.

He advised "those who wish to create chaos and justify measures such as the imposition of martial rule will gain from these acts."

The people should be vigilant given these disturbing developments, he said.

"We should be ready to vigorously oppose the devious and scheming designs of those desperate to cling one power beyond 2010," Pangilinan said.

PDI donates electronic newsrooms to UP

From page B1

quiet and Classroom.

Located in Florida Hall, Diliman MCIS and MCLL were renovated, installed with new air conditioning systems, and furnished with new seats. The electronic newsroom was equipped with 17 new flat screen computers.

"We hope that with these newsrooms, we will be able to increase the level of excellence that UP pursues and that the Inquirer strives for," Romualdez said as the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"Investing in education has always been part of the Inquirer's advocacy and social commitment," Romualdez said.

"The support we have extended to improve your school's facility will help UP develop future communicators and journalists who are ready for the world."

The Inquirer donated PI million for the renovation, "one of the largest we have made as an institution," Romualdez said.

"We are moving out of the journalism-equals-print mode," said Rachel Khan, head of the Department of Journalism. "We want to develop to our students a multimedia mentality."

Some classes opened on June 15, the electronic newsroom has been used for four laboratory classes—layouting, photojournalism, online reporting and news editing.

The new computers would also allow the department to train students on the various software used in the media industry.

The renovated rooms would benefit not only journalism students but also the college paper "Tinig ng Plaridel." Khan said. Plaridel staff members would be allowed to use the rooms for layouting.

CMC dean Roland Tolentino also granted yesterday's inauguration, which was facilitated by members of the UP Journalism Club.

The renovation project began with a proposal from Khan and former CMC dean Elena Pernia two years ago.

"The Inquirer benefits from our graduates and we know that the Inquirer is moving toward convergence. We saw the need to train our students to be geared toward convergence," Khan said.

In September 2008, UP and the Inquirer signed a memorandum of agreement for the renovation. Actual work on the classrooms began in April 2009 and was completed in time for school opening early this month.

Inquirer publisher Ingrid Vasquez cited the long history of cooperation between UP and the Inquirer.

The company has supported 40 UP scholars (including two from UP Los Baños) since 1993, many of whom went on to work with the Inquirer after graduation, Romualdez said.

"We are proud of these efforts of continually molding excellence among future media practitioners," Romualdez said.

"It is our core belief that in our pursuit of excellence, we must also maintain our responsibility of inspiring action aside from upholding truth and credibility."

JOURNALISM and communication students try out some of the 17 brand new computers in the refurbished PDI Newsroom and Inquirer classroom at the UP College of Mass Communication. The Philippine Daily Inquirer financed the P2-million renovation of two classrooms, part of the company's commitment to social responsibility. —RENE H. ESTANISLAO

Sandiganbayan junks graft raps vs top Piatco executive

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS dismissed the graft charges and lifted the hold-departure order against the former chair and president of Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (PIATCO) over the voided contract to build the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3.

In a resolution, the antigraft court's Fifth Division dismissed the case against Hector Go and allowed him to travel abroad.

The court cited a Supreme Court order on dismissing the case pertaining to Go's plea.

It also noted that government lawyers did not object to Go's motion to dismiss "despite the opportunity given to [the prosecution] by the Court."

In 2005, Go and former Transportation and Communication Secretary Vicente Rivera were accused of conspiring to push for a questionable contract to build Nia 3. The Supreme Court subsequently nullified the contract for being disadvantageous to the government.

The high tribunal at first dismissed Go's petition seeking a reversal of the Sandiganbayan ruling that junked his motion to quash the case against him.

But in a September 2007 ruling, the Supreme Court reversed itself and granted Go's motion for reconsideration.

In ordering the Sandiganbayan to dismiss the case, the high tribunal said Go was charged under the wrong provision of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act or Republic Act No. 3019.

The Sandiganbayan said: "As prayed for, the motion case against accused Henry Go is hereby ordered dismissed... Likewise, the hold-departure order dated Feb. 15, 2005, issued against accused Go is ordered lifted." — Alberto C. Sardea Jr.

Sabio: I'll speak at right time

By Philip C. Tubeza

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD Government (PCGG) Chair Camilo Sabio yesterday said he would fully explain "to the proper time and place" his frequent trips to Europe and other countries.

Sabio said he would reply in writing to Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, who has threatened to have him investigated by the Senate blue-ribbon committee if he fails to adequately explain his trips abroad and how they were funded.

"I will not comment on that as of now... I will reply creditably and in writing (to Enrile) at the proper time and place," Sabio told the Inquirer.

Enrile has written Sabio, asking him to explain his frequent foreign trips—including a recent one to Europe that the chair took with his family and friends and that was reportedly paid for by one of the cronies of ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos by the PCGG.

Enrile said he was giving Sabio up to the opening of Congress on July 27 to reply.

"[Otherwise] I will file a resolution to investigate him and [Davide] Commission," Enrile said in a radio interview.

Commission is chief executive officer and president of the CDF Holding Group, which owns five coconut oil mills under PCGG sequestration.

Querying reports he received, Enrile said Sabio had traveled abroad almost every month since 2006 and it was unclear whether those trips were official or private.

He wanted to know whether the trips were paid for by the PCGG or by the sequestered companies.

Likewise, Sabio should also explain whether those trips were necessary, said Enrile, adding that he had heard that CDF lost more than P1 billion due to various expenses. He said he suspected that PCGG officials were using CDF funds for their trips abroad.

Enrile said he also heard that some members of Sabio's family were employed by two of mills.

"We will listen to what (Sabio) has to say," Enrile said. If he does not reply, he said he would file a resolution asking the blue ribbon committee or even the President to look into the problem. Sabio or their any misgovernment. "This is not much," Enrile said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, June 30, 2009
13th Week in Ordinary Time
Jesus Martyrs of the Church of Rome
1st Reading: Gen 13:2-18
Gospel: Mt 8:23-27

Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a fierce storm hit the lake, with waves sweeping the boat. But Jesus was asleep.

They went him and cried, "Lord save us! We are lost!" But Jesus answered, "Why are you so afraid, you of little faith?" Then he stood up and ordered the wind and sea, and it became completely calm.

The people were astonished. They said, "What kind of man is he? Even the winds and the sea obey him."

Commentary

Notwithstanding all his opportunities, notwithstanding all the spiritual blessings from Heaven, Lot's wife lived and died godless, impudent and unbelieving. She kept up a form of religion for Zadkiel's sake and not from feeling. She did as others did around her to God's hours; she conformed to her husband's religion; she allowed herself to be tossed along in its wake. But, all this time, her heart was wrong in the sight of God. The world was in her heart, and her heart was in the world. In this state she lived, and in this state she died.

There is a chosen few of the greatest importance in the present day. We live in times when there are many persons (we fear) like Lot's wife; not in their outward privileges; but in as far as our eyes can see them. Are we not there thankfully, if God gives them to us; but let us take care that they produce fruit in our heart and life. One of the things that can harden our hearts is to see familiar by and sacred things. It is not privileges, which make us Christians, but the grace of Christ. Without that, we will never experience salvation or happiness!

Come back, testify, CHR tells Fil-Am activist

From page A1

man group, has accused the military of carrying out her abduction. The military denies abducting and torturing her.

She was visiting the country for an "exposure program" when she was reported missing in La Paz, Tarlac, on May 19. She returned to her home in Tarlac on May 26. Reyes quietly went aboard a plane for the United States.

At an international press conference in Los Angeles, California, on Sunday morning (Manila time), Reyes said that her interviewers had tried to suffocate her by pulling plastic bags over her head. It was the first time she spoke about her abduction and torture in a public forum.

Damages, complaint

Arimelo Valera, Reyes' lawyer in the United States, said his client would seek damages in a US federal court against the Philippine government.

Valera said his group would also file a complaint before the US Department of State and the United Nations.

De Lima said that the CHR's Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Killings, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Philip Alston, one of three people... Reyes and her companion Edward Imidor and Ramito Cambeo—took place on May 19 in La Paz, Tarlac, allegedly by a group of armed men.

De Lima "advised" the military to "desist from making a blanket denial of the reported abduction and torture" of Reyes.

Instead, she said, the military ought to conduct an "extensive, honest to goodness thorough probe" of the allegations.

Preposterous

De Lima described as "preposterous" the government claim that Reyes' abduction was "stage-managed" because the latter had given a detailed account of the incident.

the expressed hope that aside from Reyes, Cambeo would also come out to speak to the CHR.

Cambeo, however, has been tagged as a member of the New People's Army rebels in a string of news items of arrests, De Lima said.

Guided tour

De Lima, along with CHR Commissioners Norberto de Jesus and Manuel Mamauag and other CHR investigators, went to Fort Magsaysay on June 16 and had a "guided tour" of the Army camp that left them "very curious."

In an earlier interview, De Lima said that while it was "still premature to conclude," that Reyes was held in Fort Magsaysay, there were circumstances in one area that "fit" her description of the place where she said she was held for six days.

De Lima said that in particular, the sketchy, several-firing ranges and the building under construction within the perimeter the CHR team surveyed were "important" in the investigation.

"It all fits. That makes us very curious. It would really require follow-up," she said.

De Lima said the surprise visit at the Army camp was meant to "validate or verify certain facts alleged by the Reyes affidavit ... the setup, the environmental circumstances, the areas and sounds Melissa observed when in captivity."

Perimeter

It was the reason the team secured in on into the perimeter of the 48,000-hectare military camp that included the airstrip, firing ranges and where a clubhouse was being built.

De Lima said the CHR team was made to wait for 40 min. the 3rd Military Intelligence Bureau and 24th Infantry Battalion, were in western Pangasinan."

"We forgot about Tarlac. That's why we were surprised about the alleged incident," Palaco said.

Morata

Pangilinan said another possibility was that Reyes' allegations were "scripted" to make it appear that her abductors were members of the AFP.

"If you read through the revelations, the supposed abductors must be morons to allow those information to be heard by Mel Reyes," he pointed out.

Pangilinan said that "full-time Intelligence" were behind Reyes' accusations and were just out to malign the government.

Black propaganda

In Malacañang, Lorelei Fajardo, deputy presidential spokesperson, said Reyes should come up with evidence to prove her allegations.

"Many people are coming up with black propaganda just to get attention or create a scenario, which would not be productive," she said. "The government should not be giving scenarios to them."

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde was also not immediately buying Reyes' account. "We know that there are groups that do anything but deny the President," he said.

With reports from Christine Avendaño and Jocelyn R. Uy

Doctor testifies on Melissa's torture marks

By Norman Bordadora
Tonette Orejas
Inquirer General Luzon

A SOLDIER-DOCTOR FROM the human rights group Karapatan yesterday took the stand in the Court of Appeals to testify on Filipino-American activist Melissa Roxas' injuries that she physician said were caused by her abduction and torture.

The appellate court was hearing Roxas' petition for writ of amparo, a protection order for members of her family still in the country.

Dr. Eleanor Rivera Reyes presented pictures of Roxas' wrists and knees that showed abrasions.

Reyes testified on the medical report she and fellow Karapatan volunteer Dr. Raphaelita Bonagua came up with after examining Roxas on May 25, a day after she was supposedly released by her abductors.

In the medical report, Reyes and Bonagua reported that Roxas was complaining of pain in areas where she was hit. They added that she was limping and had limitation of movement in the lower jaw.

Roxas, who is a citizen of the United States, has accused the military of abducting and torturing her in May.

The military said no Army soldier assigned to the 7th Infantry Division (ID) was involved in the abduction of Roxas.

Neither was the token to and held at the division's camp in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, military officials in Central Luzon said yesterday.

There were the findings of an investigation of the abduction of Roxas by the 7th ID's Army Intelligence Unit, according to Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Villanueva, commander of the 7th ID.

Soldiers could be involved

But another military official floated the possibility of government troops' involvement in the abduction of Roxas but said her allegations were more likely "scripted."

"There are two possibilities here and one is that indeed government troops may have been involved in the attack," Brig. Gen. Teodoncio Pangilinan of the Civil Relations Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines said in a statement.

If military agents were involved in the torture and abduction of Roxas, Pangilinan said, they should be identified by name certain that they would be punished "with the full might of the law."

"If that is the case, we guarantee you that to date, our intelligence and investigative units are searching for any military personnel," he said.

Drugged

"She said she was drugged from the house," Reyes said of Roxas when asked by a lawyer from the Office of the Solicitor General if Roxas' allegations were entitled to attention.

Reyes said headwash caused the abrasions on Roxas' wrists.

Aside from the abrasions, there were no other external signs of torture, according to Reyes. There were bluish and brown spots all over the legs and arms but Reyes said these were signs of insect bites.

Based on Roxas' narration to her affidavit, she was hit on the chest, sides and face. Her hand was also banged on the wall several times.

Asphyxiation

Reyes also told the court that Roxas was subjected to asphyxiation through cello-phane bags that were used to cover her head.

Roxas alleged in the affidavit that her abductors accused her of being a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. She said she was only an volunteer worker in Central Luzon when she was abducted.

Roxas named some of her abductors as Tex, BC and Boss.

Surprised

"We cannot say that our military were involved because we had no operations in Tarlac at that time," Villanueva said in a telephone interview.

In a separate interview, Brig. Gen. Cirne Pilotco, commander of the 7th ID, said: "During that time, we were all committed to saving lives and properties of people in Pangasinan (due to a typhoon). Almost all efforts of my two battalions,

Toothless rights body would hurt Asean

From page A1

panel drafting the AHRB's terms of reference (TOR), also calls for the appointment of independent experts to the body.

The terms of reference, which detail the AHRB's purposes and duties, are expected to be adopted by the end of the 42nd Asean Ministerial Meeting. The AHRB itself is to be formally launched in October.

The draft TOR has not been made public but lawmakers who have seen it say that while it focuses on promoting human rights, it gives no power to the AHRB to investigate and prosecute.

The TOR is opposed to maintain Asean's adherence to its noninterference policy, which some members have invoked to ward off criticism of their rights records.

The civil society groups wanted a human rights body with no protection powers or independent experts would not halt human rights violations, protect human rights, and promote social justice.

"The model without bodily sin Asean is being unable to live up to the spirit of its own Charter and further dent the credibility of Asean in the eyes of the international community by setting up a substandard regional human rights mechanism as compared to those in the Africa, Inter-American and European systems," the June 22 letter said.

The letter was resigned by the Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy Task Force on Asean and Human Rights and the Asian Human Rights Commission, which, although removed by then Presidents Suharto, did not become a participant in the conference but criticized abuses and tried to end them.

Indonesia's example

Noonan Asia underscored the importance of having competent experts in the AHRB, saying they could make the body relevant to beleaguered peoples.

"They could also help the AHRB initiate actions to reduce human rights problems even with a limited mandate, Forum-Asia's Nyiyu Pakpahan, program manager for East Asia, told the Inquirer.

Pakpahan said it was critical that the people represented the AHRB would not be afraid to reconsider the government line, if necessary.

She said this was the case with Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission which, although created by then Presi-

First time

Former Asean Secretary General Rodolfo Severino of the Philippines said the establishment of the body was a step forward.

"For the first time, Asean will have a body concerned with human rights. This is no advance. It certainly will not have powers of 'enforcement' in an assistance of sovereign state, but it can bring to the people's attention the problems of human rights," Severino said in an email interview.

He pointed out there was no transnational human rights body anywhere with the power to punish or protect.

De Lima said that in particular, the sketchy, several-firing ranges and the building under construction within the perimeter the CHR team surveyed were "important" in the investigation.

"It all fits. That makes us very curious. It would really require follow-up," she said.

De Lima said the surprise visit at the Army camp was meant to "validate or verify certain facts alleged by the Reyes affi-

Don't seek treatment if you're not sick—DOH

From page A1

asked the public not to overextend and seek needless treatment and a threat swab test at the slightest sign or symptom of the influenza A(H1N1) virus.

Dr. Ma. Paz Roque, surveillance officer of the National Epidemiology Center, yesterday said the government had only one laboratory and was expanding a minimum of P10,000 each for three tests.

Because of the swine flu scare, the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) in Muntinlupa is swamped with some 200 specimens daily, up from only 20 to 30 a few weeks ago.

"We don't want to use the word 'pressing' (pumasok) but let's be socially responsible," Roque said at a press briefing in Malacañang.

"It's a burden on our public health system, particularly in the lab examinations."

But how would you know if you're sick unless you go to a doctor?

"That is the basic question: if you don't have signs and symptoms of the influenza virus, why seek treatment?" Roque said.

Under observation

He insisted that priority be given to "cases under observation" (UUO)—sick people who had traveled to A(H1N1)-affected countries and had been in contact with confirmed cases.

Roque said health officials were also on the lookout for the high-risk populations—the very young and very old, those with compromised immune system, those with diabetes, asthma, liver and kidney problems and those with uncontrolled hypertension.

Despite constant reminders by the DOH, he said people are falling under these categories would still insist on having their throat swab specimens tested.

Clogged

As a result, Roque said the RITM was getting clogged with specimens and results had to wait for about three days.

Roque said many of the tests turned out negative...anyway.

He said the government would ramp up the facilities of Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu to accommodate specimens for the Visayas and Mindanao.

The Lung Center of the Philippines and San Lazaro Hospital will also be asked to examine throat swabs using guidelines prepared by the DOH.

Roque said cases were few for patients under the UUO category and who went to a government hospital.

Those who would go to private hospitals would have to pay extra for any freight cost for the specimens.

Roque said members of Philippine Health Insurance Corp. could use their health cards for treatment. He said Philhealth members could avail themselves of as much as P70,000 for the treatment.

Soldiers infected

Seven soldiers were infected with the swine flu virus as 11 others remained in isolation for further observation, according to a military official.

Although they have fully recovered, the seven soldiers from the Philippine Navy are still completing their medication, said Navy spokesperson Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo.

The DOH has stopped providing daily updates on the cases of confirmed and suspected cases, but will only give weekly updates on cases.

Some people in the province say we're already downplaying because we're not providing daily updates anymore. But this doesn't mean we are not doing our job anymore. We are just focusing our work," said Dr. Lyndon Lee Ong, an infectious disease specialist of the DOH.

Hausa reopens

Amid a tight health watch that would last up to President Macapagal Arroyo's State of the Nation Address next month, the House of Representatives reopened yesterday.

After being shut down for six days following the death of an employee partly due to the virus, the Batasang Pambansa complex in Quezon City underwent work, rest and visitors, but they had to be thermally scanned before being allowed inside.

The whole complex was disinfected starting 6:30 a.m.

All ministers had guards armed with the handheld thermal scanners that are pointed at the people's foreheads to get their temperature.

Those who register 38 degrees Celsius or higher were told to go home.

Those with lower temperatures were allowed entry and made to wear a green and yellow "flower lei" sticker. With reports from Dona Pazzibugan and Jocelyn R. Uy and Leila B. Salaverria

This article was written under the 2009 Southeast Asian Press Alliance fellowship.

Gov't troops hunt killers of 7 cops

By Julie S. Alipala
Chief of correspondents
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—GOVERNMENT forces have launched a massive hunt for suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits and "regular" Moro rebels who killed seven police men and one civilian agent in an ambush in Sumisip town in Basilan on Sunday.

"They won't stop until all the killers are arrested," Chief Supt. Bernardo Mendoza, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said in PNP ajitor.

Brig. General Ruperto Cantorna, 101st Mission Brigade commander, said he had also sent the Marine Battalion Landing Team 1 (MBLT1) to support the 1519th and 1508th police provincial mobile groups.

Informers identified the leaders of the attackers as Amir Mingkung, who was once rumored with the Sumisip-based Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Commander Abugan Sirpak. They are operating in Mahan town, he said.

"They were claiming to be members of the MILF but as far as we are concerned, they are members of the Abu Sayyaf," Antonio said.

Killed in the ambush were PO3 Mohaidel Hajid and Police Officers 1 Omar Pallong, Abdulajir Sedlin, Asgar Rasdan, Alfarad Jakilal and Ibrahim Sali. Jr., Insp. Reynan Jamasal, three executive officer, and civilian agent Hajid Pallong.

Basilan Gov. Jum Akbar said the lawmen were on their way back to camp in Mahan after escorting Vice Mayor Almahera Aarsonal to Sumisip where they were attacked.

The killers took the police men's firearms, Mendoza said.

He said the attack could have been triggered by the arrest of a brother of an MILF commander or the escape of kidnap victim Leah Dorin.

SHOOT
TWO-YEAR-OLD Jerome Jr. bids goodbye to his father, Capt. Jerome Rapanut, during the funeral assault of the police Special Action Force in Basilan. With Jerome Jr. is his mother, also an SAF Capt. Vicky Rapanut. AP

Massive gov't operation vs NPA rebels in Capiz

ROXAS CITY—COMMUNIST rebels and government troops clashed twice in Tapaz town in Capiz on Saturday, resulting in the wounding of five soldiers, the military said.

The attacks prompted officials of the Army's 47th Infantry Battalion to launch a massive operation against the New People's Army (NPA) in the province.

About 10 NPA rebels fired at a group of soldiers at 7:30 a.m. in Barangay Agdaol, while they were on their way to a two-planning activity in another village.

Cpl. Leonard Tejada and Pfc. Rolly Canipe were wounded during the 45-minute shootout, according to 1Lt. Mark Andrew Paredes, information officer of the 3rd Infantry Division based at Camp Gen. Macario Peralta Jr. in Jamindan town in Capiz.

At 9:40 a.m. that same day, NPA rebels attacked a five-member Army team on a reconnaissance mission in Sitio Barangasan, Barangay Katipunan, also in Tapaz. "They (soldiers) were supposed to clear the road for incoming Army reinforcements," Paredes said in a statement.

Stranded in the 10-minute battle were Corporals Melquiades Cantorella and Rani Dicodemus, and Pfc. Johnnie Ulmo.

Paredes said the rebels, led by a certain "Ka Satoying," detonated an explosive device before withdrawing.

A 15-man Army team sent to the ambush site recovered one Claymore land mine and 30 meters of electrical wire, he said.

The wounded soldiers were brought to the headquarters of the 47th Infantry Battalion in nearby Calinog town in Iloilo and later moved to the Calinog District Hospital and the Iloilo Mission Hospital in Iloilo City.

Paredes said rounds of the 47th IB were pulled out in other areas to pursue the NPA rebels. "It is a major operation to pursue the enemy and they are being supported by choppers," he said.

The soldiers clashed again with the NPA rebels on Monday morning, he said, but could not give details.

But for the 50th it Army said the military's counterinsurgency campaign had failed. "Not a single bullet" that the rebel group has collected was discharged, it said. Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Felipe V. Cobus, Inquirer Visayas

HQ. GEN. Victoria Porto, 3rd Division commander, visits and gives a medal to one of the wounded soldiers, Cpl. Rolly Canipe at the Iloilo Mission Hospital in Iloilo City. The soldiers were ambushed by NPA rebels in Capiz. INQ

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OPINION

Search for truth

IT IS GOOD THAT FILIPINO-AMERICAN MELISSA Roxas, a member of the US chapter of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), has announced that she would sue military agents who tortured her almost to the point of death. Her lawyer said she would seek damages in a US federal court against the Philippine government and his group would also file a complaint before the US State Department and the United Nations.

EDITORIAL

She should also file a case in a Philippine court, and hope that others who went through experiences similar to hers will follow her example and file their complaints.

The filing of a case in a US federal court and of complaints before the US State Department and the United Nations may yet produce a result similar to that of the case filed by nearly 10,000 victims of human rights violations during the Marcos dictatorship. In 1995 a court in Hawaii awarded the complainants $2 billion in damages. But more than just the payment of damages to Roxas, the cases she filed should result in the revelation of the truth about not just her complaint but also about the 1,000 cases of torture, the 1,013 victims of extrajudicial killings and the 202 victims of enforced disappearances since President Macapagal-Arroyo came into power in 2001.

The Philippine government has said that Roxas' story was stage-managed. But what would she gain by inventing a story of torture? She was visiting the Philippines as a volunteer for an "exposure program" when she was reported missing in La Paz, Tarlac, on May 19. She returned to her Tarlac home on May 26. She said she nearly suffocated when her torturers put two plastic bags over her head. This is surely something that she would never forget for the rest of her life.

She said she was abducted by men she believed to be members of the military. It appeared that she was detained at a military camp in Nueva Ecija, presumably Fort Magsaysay. She was grilled by men who addressed one of them as "Sir." She was told that she was abducted because she was a member of the New People's Army.

Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., Armed Forces spokesperson, denied that Roxas was tortured by military agents at Fort Magsaysay. But of course they will deny that extrajudicial killings, tortures and enforced disappearances are being carried out by military agents. Those agents may not be members of regular Armed Forces units but of secret, shadowy military groups often referred to as Army "black squads."

These groups have been operating under a climate of impunity since Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency, spurred by her order to the generals to stamp out the communist insurgency by 2010. The military and the police have gone all-out in their campaign, targeting and attacking not just the armed guerrillas of the New People's Army but also unarmed, non-combatant leftist militants and activists.

Not the extrajudicial killings, the tortures, the enforced disappearances go on. And nobody is held on account for them. On the contrary, generals and other officers like Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who have played important roles in this mad-dog campaign that does not distinguish between combatants and civilians are not held to account but are feted and praised publicly and rewarded with plum posts by Ms Arroyo.

Roxas has said that these killings, tortures and enforced disappearances have got to stop. She said: "I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone else ever again. I want the world to know what happened because the Philippine government and military should not get away with what they did to me."

She has taken the first step toward the discovery of the truth about the extrajudicial killings, tortures and enforced disappearances under the Arroyo administration. She deserves the support of all people who believe in the sanctity and value of human life and in the correct and fair dispensation of justice. We hope that, as in the human rights case tried in the US, this case will produce positive results for the victims, their relatives and survivors, and help put an end to a dark chapter in the Philippines' history.

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Blank checks

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

A GEOGRAPHY OF 7,016 PUNCTURED Islands, even at low tide, has pan-offs. It offers insights into how potentials for 21st-century affluence is sapped by 19th century miseries.

Western Visayas is no example. Cross one of the twin bridges, spanning the narrow Iloilo River channel from Cebu, and you're in Lapu-Lapu City a hazy of 292,536 people, the flawed 2007 census claims. Visitors bushwhacked explorer Ferdinand Magellan here in 1521. Today Lapu-Lapu hosts 142 factories in economic zones. Workers, entrepreneurs, are professed born account for 9 percent of our exports. Over 40,000 workers raise the daytime population density to 1,581 persons per square kilometer. One out of four has a college degree.

Economic spinoff from Cebu's port is substantial. Iloilo's airport is the core of Western Visayas regional airport. On the East Asian lifeguard ry flyway, 97 species of birds make pitstops at Olando strip...of Marcos.

But voters' names also fly out. Those critical of Lapu-Lapu City Hall have found that their names can crop up on registries elsewhere.

Over a quarter (26.6 percent) of homes lack toilets. Ambulant peddlers hard sturdy water into 27 percent of Lapu-Lapu homes. Expert zone firms pay turkeys to fill their concrete. New wells siphon from already crumbling aquifers.

In Metro Cebu, 1,820 rusted sewers spotted into the economy of providence. Lapu-Lapu Mayor Jerome Thomas and Mandaue Mayor Thadeo Cesario snapped up P565-million worth of own-priced steel tanks for the 1,026 Asian tsunamis. Only 40 lamps function today. Both were suspended for the term.

Those 1,920 "acute painfilms of guilt"... reek of collusion by multiple parties," former Central Bank governor Jose Cuisia told businessmen. Get on with the prosecution, Cuisia pleaded a base dragging Office of the Ombudsman.

A graft overdose normally instills fear to retard its workings. Lapu-Lapu's mayor's amnesia rushed it. They handed Radaza, still unchecked raids unresolved charges, "mediocrity in negotiation and sweet time contracts with investors for a P18.2 billion Marine Health Reclamation and Development Project."

By a 10 to 1 vote, they authorized him to "open a credit line with any universal bank or accredited financial institution to fund the project." This blank check is for a 400 hectare megapark, industrial and business park.

The questions didn't mount a design plan, counselor Arnold Chan protested, thus ignoring zero environmental and economic impact studies for Barangays Ibo, Basak, Marina and Punta Engaño in Lapu-Lapu's northern coast.

Sleg pumping sealing zone / in pugnacio legislature." The ordinance passed's stamp. "Granted discussion end up in regrets."

"It was obviously approved in a rush," Chan explained. "I am not opposed to the project. But we have to be transparent." Give it to Radaza. He never claimed transparency was his winning suit. Voters hungry seems to be the more visible fraud. Other actions have been dicted under the rug.

For buying P23.4 million worth of Pentium 4 computer clones at double their cost in legit computer shops, Radaza and 18 others were sued. The case is pending.

Another term. Some who funneled 624 favors' funds into a congressman's private account were booted.

The 2007 Mactan Island Chamber of Commerce and Industry survey reported that "1/3 of operations and the mayor himself made the demand for money." One of the mayor's associates demanded the grease for release of license, permit or clearance. 21 respondents claimed.

Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia is naive that the Regional Development Council pass on the reclamation proposal. President Macapagal-Arroyo already announced approval in 2006, with cute advancement Jocelyn Thebes: "Region Seven been established." Disapproval would "subject the President to ridicule."

Really? Here's the 21st commandment of crapo politics in words: "Thou shalt always take the name of thy boss in vain."

The election of an episode meanwhile.

Who'll implement this no-bottom program, if it rides off? Madame the Indiana, of course, since the mayor plans to run for Congress. It will be a "Mom and Boy" show. They're the rulers in a country dominated by dynasties, like the Aenyans and Osmeñas.

In the land of health, Ms Indira can campaign vigorously. The mugged earlier from the Rural Bank of Guinobatan for "health reasons." An income report last Jan. 12 on the Legaspi scam says that bank collapsed from P1.2 billion worth of "ghost loans." The Cebu Daily Newsexposed last May 27 that depositors gnawed up to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) claims.

Bank scams and evolutionism "blank checks" are valid election issues. Add to that urban Commission on Elections' (now) Comelibrar Jose Melchor Cleofas Chitong Pono Comelec. The Comelec is looking for reasons why voters' registration in Lapu-Lapu showed is a crawl. Most comers register 200 voters a day. Not in Lapu-Lapu, it's down to 100. Only 50 are accreditation meanings. Another 50 are found in the afternoons, not in schools but in city hall.

Election integrity hinges on the reliability of registration process. Findings by the Comelec and the PDIC should provide a useful input for 2010 campaign debates, specially on fractured islands.

"It seems a dreadful indignity to have a soul controlled by geography," as George Santayana once observed.

(E-mail: jmercado@gmail.com)

Pop

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

NO ONE BELIEVED A FRIEND OF MINE when he came in to announce that Michael Jackson had just suffered a heart attack and was near death. He had heard it on the radio, he said, on the way to us.

Someone said it was typical of Jackson to manufacture an affliction before a major concert, to get out of it. He had done it a number of times and was due to mount a series of concerts in England. Maybe he got cold feet, maybe he was seized by a sudden panic he was not up to it. Another said it was probably just another promotional gimmick by the man. There was pretty much of Jackson had been reduced to, screaming spectacular gimmicks in lieu of spectacular performances.

An hour later, news came to dispel the speculations: Michael Jackson was dead at 50. It was early afternoon in Los Angeles. The speculations turned from cynical to sympathetic. Death has a way of shutting the bad mouthers and recapitulating the good ones. It was probably due to drugs. Jackson, the illegal kind that dogged such stars like Jim Morrison, only the paranoid kind that had less people like Elvis Presley, Elton John suffered from all sorts of afflictions, real or imagined, and had been a walking source before his death.

The comparison was apt in more ways than one. Both had once been kings of pop, both had since become fallen royalty, both had become hideous caricatures of themselves. In the end's case that was literal, the face he wore not far from the one Heath Ledger wore in "The Dark Knight," both rendered their features early to death.

Over the next few hours—and days—the networks buried with news of Jackson, vying with one another to discover the most intimate details about him. Almost overnight, his death took on the aspect of the death of Princess Di, young and old, or at least middle-aged who had witnessed Jackson's coming of age in the early 1980s, gathering in cavernous places to pay homages to and hold vigil for him. Jackson might not have been the King of Pop in Britain's Princess of Wales, but for much of America—and England (the networks showed us well-grieving hordes of fans there)—there was precious little difference.

Post the sob fiesta(s), she had died on that day, but she soon buried under the news long before the world got buried under the earth. She became a footnote to death as the hailstorm in Ifi.

The public reaction to Jackson's death evoked conflicting emotions in me.

What a waste of talent. I thought like most everyone. But in more ways than one. I too had marveled at Jackson's awesome gifts in the early 1980s. I remember that Fred Astaire paid him the ultimate compliment by saying he was the best dancer he had seen, generous accepted on him in every way. Most specifically in his discipline and control. Other dancers generated more nobility, other dancers contorted more gymnastically, but they did not have his discipline. they did not have his control. He had economy of movement, he had precision. Those were the marks of the maestro.

I remember as well the Time magazine issue that featured him on its cover and the article that accompanied it. It reader-complained that he didn't know if the writer (Jay Cocks, I think) was talking about Michael Jackson or about God. Another reader asked: if there was a difference.

Michael's fall from grace has been well documented, notably his years of child molestation. I myself denied that to the time he first showed a deep-seated desire to become a white man. He would justify that by saying he suffered from a disease that bleached his skin pigmentation. But why a disease that went from flat to chiseled, no? That was the real worry.

He and the other Michael Dreikiest were two of the people who found the black persuasion so unbearable that they had to run away from it. The irony of it is that, as many of the stories about Jackson over the last 20 hours have shown, he wasn't seen as black or white in his Thriller days. For the first time, audiences had been stricken color-blind and saw him only as, well, the great Michael Jackson. He had to "cure" himself of his blackness (and, even more so, with the Velocity of a Paradise penis entry, it was said, very very real. Germans may be ill-versed their sociocentricities, but they may not be allowed those indiscretions.

My other reaction to it was to marvel at the breathtaking cynicism to which pop culture has stooped into our lives—or at least in the lives of Americans and Filipinos, though other peoples are not altogether exempt. Both it—of the excuse to which the media tend to soak up in this culture. I do not know which is the crazy one which is the effect, the public compelling the media to soak up (or it or the media setting the public, sarcasm is it. Probably chicken and egg. But it does add whole new meanings to the term, "silver bar."

At least, as the movie "The Queen" shows, the Lady Di phenomenon had ramifications for royalty that went beyond Diana's pop icon status. But the hysteria over Jackson's death? I have others to analyze it and give it the importance I do not find it deserves. But such is our sense of proportion: Harold Pinter and John Updike, two giants of literature, die, the one in December last year and the other in January this year, and we do not notice they are gone. Jackson dies, and we are bereaved and bereft. As sense of proportion goes, it's Hayden like, the world swims.

I remember Edward Marrow's speech to defend CBS journalist Daniel Schorr at the end of "Good Night and Good Luck." He had just cudgel Joseph McCarthy's reign of terror in the 1950s and was embossing over the emotional power of television to educate, to enlighten, to foster informed opinion. He dreamed of the day when TV would be a force to reason by provoking thought than dulling laughter.

The way things are, that day is still ways off. A long way off.

GMA vs David: premature titillation

LAST JUNE 23, THE GOLDEN SCORED a coup with the country's 15th chief justice, Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura. He will, as we boldly speculated here on Charter change, the coming elections and GMA's political plans. Macalintal hinted that if GMA were to use her legislative ally to try to be in the forefront to capture the presidency—perhaps in a parliamentary shift, there's something the public are forgetting: the next president is not likely to allow his or her term to be contested, after spending a couple of billions, and hand over the reins of government to the Speaker, Manila mayor or the disappearing. And if it won't happen, he says, what's the point of her running for reelection? But supporting the Transitory Provisions would ensure that the machinery of government won't be disrupted by elections. Even if GMA were to run, probably if independent delegates to a constitutional convention are elected, he said. Thus, there would still be little sense for ERAP to run for House.

Yesterday, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Catholic Church drew in a close its "Anno Paulino," the one-year celebration of the 2,000th birth anniversary of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Called by Pope Benedict XVI to commemorate the bimillennial, the year-long celebration of his life and works, and to renew interest in his writings, was launched on June 28, 2008, with solemn ceremonies at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, where the Apostle's remains are buried. Pope Benedict himself presided over the opening rites, which included the lighting of a special lamp and the unveiling of a bronze statue of St. Paul.

Paging Mayor Jimmy Bondoc. Residents of several barangays in the 4th district of Quezon City, particularly Libertad and Kamuning, are up in arms over the construction of a basement of three high-rise condominium buildings along C. Salazar Street. City Hall sources say that a special permit for the project, introduced and sponsored by councilors Ricardo T. Belmonte II and Eduardo B. Luguman Jr. and co-sponsored by councilors Isabelita Bonoan, Medalla and Bertos, was railroaded by the council without even giving aggrieved residents and home owners a chance to air their objections. The residents say that this project violates the zoning laws applicable to the area, and it would worsen the already very bad traffic jams there. They are appealing to the mayor and other responsible officials to stop this illegal construction, and to the 4th district councilors to revoke the ordinances. With elections a year away, what these city officials should do is mobilize people power to block these officials.

Magsaysay awardee, priest and theater connoisseur-expert Jaime B. Bulatao SJ, who died in a Manila hospital on the Philippine Star 1st many years, has retired, and he is surely missed by his many admirers. He also left Xavier House in Sta. Ana, Manila, which was home to him for a long time, and is now occupying at the Our Lady of Grace Hospital in Parañaque, which he had a hand in setting up 18 years ago. He's being taken care of well by the hospital staff. Well, folks will have a chance for a session with him and other Ateneo "Bulatao" alumni at the Rizal Library's Multimedia Hall auditorium this September with him put up a concert in him on July 4 at 7 p.m. at the Philam Life Auditorium on UN Avenue, Manila.

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They don't fear us

I AM NOT, GONDOLIT SPEAKING, A VERY TOLERANT man. But of all the things that count my ire, I reserve a special, seething hatred for the wrong seeing.

My favorite wrong-seeing anecdote concerns the (sad) epic journey of one particular convoy of official vehicles that a friend had the bad luck to witness. All the exhibits had their windows done up in the always-trendy opaque tint (which reduces daylight to a dim).

Bother of their drivers. While most of us would unconsciously assume that the beneficiary of such royal treatment was a VIP, a very important person, it turned out that this particular convoy was bearing a heinous bad-

Young Blood

Paolo Chikiamco

We seem to know what the young are thinking about. What are their ideas? Do you have any opinions? We welcome contributions from the country's rising generation. —Ed.

dresser who had just possibly been caught in his dead with a fashion emergency of great national significance.

I know that I am not alone in feeling this way: the hoopla on an editorial has April demeaning the wrong-seeing culture of our government officials. In an age when many videos of our personal antics can measure the attention of media and government for days, I am lastly surprised the matter could do with a bit more explanation. And I am happy to lend a hand to the cause.

The Inquirer editorial asked government officials to "reconsider the sense of entitlement, the sense of inflated dignity they display." But making that plea, I am afraid, only plays to the unsatisfied image government officials have created for themselves. To my mind, to echo first of the egos of our "public servants" is not to know that we should respect, but a demand we should make.

From the way they conduct their affairs, one would be forgiven for thinking that our highest officials do not owe us anything. When one looks at the tarpaulin banners stretched across our thoroughfares and spots at the dazzling smiles of congressmen, what we feel is not gratitude but contempt. So—and? Do, our would think that we, the citizens, owed them a debt of gratitude for their wonderful projects, and timely governings complete with badly photo-shopped graduation caps or fiesta hats, as the case may be). They project themselves as magnanimous benefactors, showering us with job fairs and flu vaccinations and every expecting us to run out with thanks and praise. Which seems like a fair exchange ... one thing except that they are behaving like a child who expects to be given a token juice pouch every time he is able to hand the phone without anyone dying.

What many of our "public servants" seem to have forgotten today is the basic job description of the public. Have in the past, they have forgotten? If they ever ever realized it that it is we, the citizens, who have hired them to do those jobs. We are the ones who select them, we are the ones who pay them, and we are the ones who get to fire them when we get out.

Let me repeat. They work for us—all of them, from the lowest to the highest—to the President herself, who, after we vote for them, owes us nothing. We agree with them or not.

But it has become increasingly difficult to find a government official who does not believe and act like he (or she) and his entire family are entitled to his current position (if not a higher one) simply by reason of his identity. If you ever had a run-in with a high-level official (or a member of his extended family), chances are that he is doing you still have in some variation of the following, coupled with a confident sneer: "Don't you know who I am?"

In which, I suggest, the most appropriate response would be, "Like—but you have obviously forgotten."

And indeed they have forgotten who we are. Forgotten their duty. For it is their duty, and not a privilege, to serve the people that they have elected, this perpetual "Opposite Day" that we have allowed them to create, they are our rulers instead of our servants; our masters instead of our aides. They do not think of themselves as accountable to us, they do not think they owe us their time, or their candor, or even their presence at their place of work. And because they think they are accountable to us, they do not respect us and they do not fear us.

If we are to have the government we deserve, this must change.

In other countries, we can already see the writing on the wall. In 2006, a leading United States politician was brought low because he was caught committing a crime with a camera that's now a meme: a muffled politician rise up and break the taser-imposed silence with the help of social media and a sympathetic international community. A major British newspaper now provides an online platform in which British citizens can audit the digital records of allowance claims filed by the members of Parliament. In the Philippines, the Commission on Elections unleashed a capacity for speech and participation previously limited by economic and logistical constraints.

However, technology will prove unavailing for as long as we citizens continue to view ourselves as supplicants instead of supervisors and continue to endure the kind of arrogance of "public servants" that we have come to expect. Our unconscious tempers, never mind our own employees. We should not accept it as a fact of life when politicians refuse to answer questions on matters of public interest or take positions without prior consultation with their constituents, or, indeed, incorporate other interests simply because they need their backs turned to the public eye.

We have already seen the silence of the bedroom-weekend. With the arrival of camera phones and 24/7 media Internet, the time is fast approaching when secret backroom deals will be revealed to the public.

Our political leaders may not fear us now. But soon they will.

Paolo Chikiamco, 29, is a lawyer who recently resigned from a top law firm to pursue a career in writing and publishing.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.net.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Unsolicited manuscripts not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Foolish but necessary

"It's probably the most foolish thing to do. I know it's patriotic to run against the President—somebody who has to speak about using all the powers of the office ... but I think somebody has to step first. And if we get to that point, I will do my part even if that may be myself."

—Lieutenant of the Philippine police and former columnist Ronald "Red" Llamas, saying he would consider running against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo should she run for representative of Pampanga's 2nd district

Warning to smokers

TWO CITIES IN METRO MANILA HAVE JOINED efforts to implement a ban on smoking in public places considered in RA 9211 or the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003. Recently, Mandaluyong and Muntinlupa created task forces and launched campaigns to enforce the law, several years after the law was passed, but a workable development anyway.

In Mandaluyong, it took more than two years for the city government to declare that public places—City Hall, plazas, roads and churches, to name some—are smoke-free. The task force implements no-to-smoke-order issued by Mayor Abalos. But Bedes, Mandaluyong's Public Information Office chief, is building the national campaign against smoking.

Under the ordinance, first-time violators have a fine of P200 or one to six days in prison while consecutive violations will cost P1,000 or a spend three to five days in detention. Third-time violators will have to pay P3,000 or be jailed for a week.

Members of the task group include representatives from the city police, Traffic Management Department and Public Order and Safety Office, among the legislative office, environment department and the city health office.

In Mandaluyong, meanwhile, posters have been put up in public places and billboards to raise the dangers of smoking and citing the provisions of the anti-smoking ordinance of Mandaluyong, enacted in 2005 but implemented only belatedly until recently. The posters also contain the penalties for offenders, which could reach P1,000 or jail time for three days, and P5,000 or imprisonment for three days but not more than six days or both upon the discretion of the court for the third offense.

Aside from banning smoking in open public spaces, the ordinance also declares as "Smoke-Smoke-Free Areas" enclosed public spaces like government and/or public buildings, schools or offices, hospitals and/or medical clinics, and all enclosed public spaces with a roof or covering.

THE NEWS about the ordinances and new public utilities in Mandaluyong and Muntinlupa was shared by Bobby Ipe, a lawyer with Healthchain Inc. (HCI) which focuses in using the law to promote the right to health.

Ipe wrote that their coalition of anti-smoking advocates among those who trained the agencies's barangays in Bonac, and we will relish it to a review in a lifetime experience.

* * *

Reports say that just a week before Anne Perlas-Bernabe to a close, Tobacco manufacturers using have technology discovered what it believed to be the oldest image in existence of the Apostle, dating from the 4th century, on the walls of the Catacomb of Santa Tecla in Rome. The bronze-colored the image of a man with a pointed black beard and high forehead combined, against a red background and a bright yellow halo. That is believable because tradition holds that both Saints Peter and Paul were temporarily interred in the catacombs after their martyrdom and before their remains were transferred to churches there erected to great basilicas erected in their honor. It was common practice among early Christians in Rome to bury their dead in the labyrinthine catacombs long outside the walls and decorate the walls with devotional images. The newly discovered image of St. Paul will enrich the list of material cited for his legend of devotion.

* * *

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POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

organizations will soon be releasing a directory of local persons to whom reports of violations to Mandaluyong can be sent.

The biggest problem faced in the implementation of local anti-smoking ordinances is lack of awareness, says Ipe and the lack of will among local executives to go against the popular culture.

In response to Ipe's news, Gloria Talavera Barton, a lawyer based in Cebu and lectured on environmental issues (she leads the legal battle for the protection of basin Oslob, ruling in the life of the dolphins and other creatures whose habitat is endangered), writes that they have sent letters to Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia and local executives about the issue. In their letter, they cited provincial government and those of Cebu City, Mandaue City, Lapu-lapu and Talisay—all part of Metro Cebu—the anti-smoking champions pushed for compliance and enforcement of RA 9211. They have yet to receive a reply, Barton said.

"Let's take the law literally into our own hands. Let us promote the compliance from the LGUs and to our fellow citizens, cooperate fully with the administrators, and discuss the issue with students, professors, citizens," urges Barton.

* * *

TO MY mind, anti-smoking legislation is not as much aimed at curtailing the rights of smokers, as it is protecting and promoting the rights of non-smokers.

Nicotine addicts and promoters may argue that their habit and business don't interfere with the rights of non-smokers. But scientific studies have shown that second hand or side-stream smoke pos-

Ben Zayb and the possibility of journalism

IN RUMI SONELL, AS IN THE HARRY POTTER mystology, Journalists get a bad press. About a hundred years before J. K. Rowling gave us the "Prophet," there was "Ben Zayb," the fictional name for the equally invasive Ben Zayb. He, Saliba, he characterized the character from real life, Tolstoy like. A footnote in the Lorin translation of "Fili" says, Ben Zayb: "A character based on several journalists representing the worst traits of the profession." Another, J. F. del Pan, Francisco Calaunsque, M. Sheik y Sheries, and others."

If like me you believe that "Noli" and "Fili" are a treasure of our progress as a nation—if the indictments still stung, the reality hasn't changed all that much—then you will understand the resonance of Rizal's low opinion of journalism is a matter of great concern. The Ben Zaybs of the profession continue to multiply like mushrooms after a rain or insects after a celebrity death.

Rizal's low opinion of journalism's but, too—especially about his stories from had articles in La Solidaridad analyzing European political events. But between the writing of "Noli" (published in 1887) and the writing of "Fili" (published in 1891), his distaste for journalism of the Ben Zayb variety deepened.

In one instance in "Noli," he moves the narrative by reproducing the letter of an unnamed correspondent: "From one of Manila's newspapers and distinguished correspondent, remarkable for his serious question." The letter, reporting the feats in San Diego, even implies: "I have never before encountered, nor did I ever expect to see, in the provinces, a religious festival so solemn, splendid, and exciting as this one being celebrated in this town. The reporter's enthusiasm is unbounded, and his admiration for the town's leaders." (I am using the Penguin Classics edition.)

The reader of the novel knows, of course, that the reality described before and after the chapter on correspondence is just the opposite. Imagine the reporter's reaction if he knew that he was just his normal journalistic "fare" in "Noli," via his specimen of colonial journalism merely one to ridicule on Spain.

NEWSSTAND

Sabin Nery

In "Fili," Ben Zayb (the pen name the journalists uses, an anagram of his real name Bailey) is of most a major character; he even gets an entire chapter all to himself. We first meet him as a journalist on the steamship "Tabo," where he is described as a "prolific writer" who "considered himself as the only real thinker in the entire colony." Ben Zayb remained aloof, half-smiling, perhaps out of respect or because he did not know what answer to give. Among his being the only thinking head in the Philippines" (This of course is among quotations are from the Lorin translation.)

But his real take on as journalist becomes more. Not only as the novel proceeds: he is always in the company of the powerful, he takes part in the machinations of power, and he is the one who puts the praises of so many favor with the powers that be.

When the conspirators to maneuver the colonial administration at the wedding of Basilio (Crisostomo and Juanito Pelaez is discovered, Ben Zayb makes call to some when he is already making up his own version of the article that would ever be read under Philippine rules. He systematically misdescribes, misreads details of the incident. He interpreted Padre Irene's (powerful) act of placing himself under the table as an "impulse of intense valor which the missionaries of the Faith have always shown, even throughout life, had not been able to date." He ends his piece with a farewell to the governor-general, who was returning to Spain: "To proclaim, by his own voice, with regret but joined the dear friendship he made with the people of this epoch!" He reacts with practical enthusiasm to the government's decision to impose a more thickset on the incident, and that on his story: "If only so more dangers to people's health than inhaling cigarette smoke directly. Even if done outdoors, smoking affects the health of innocent bystanders, whose lungs and other organs are damaged by the smoke entering their system, combining with the other toxic substances floating in our polluted atmosphere.

The anti-smoking legislation thus limits smoking to areas where second-hand smoke will not inflict damage to others in the privacy of one's home, or in designated smoking areas, which we should hope have adequate measures to prevent non-smoking areas from being affected (air conditioning ducts, for example, and still affect everyone inside a building).

But other problem, granted the public awareness and support, the dangers of smoking and second-smoke already exist, or the lack of completion mechanism for the ordinary citizen. To whom do non-smokers report violations of the law and who has the power to accost violators?

* * *

SMOKING is also an environmental problem, and we're talking here not just of the problem they cause to our health.

If smokers are concerned as much about their own health, they're also apparently heedless of their surroundings. Have you noticed how cigarette butts litter our streets and sidewalks? Have you seen the many butts and ashes strewn on beaches, parks, pathways, the floors of offices and in toilet bowls?

But I guess if someone is so careless as to subtly inhale toxic chemicals, we can't expect him to have to have the discipline to dispose of cigarette butts for the dictates of a habit. I remember going to the beach just this past Holy Week and finding it even dirtier with cigarette butts. Ano about recycled for this?

Congratulations to the mayors of Mandaluyong and Muntinlupa for their strides. And a word of warning to smokers everywhere: People are getting fed up, and often, you're putting not only your environment and have our health without permit or action.

Rina Jimenez-David is editorial consultant of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Her e-mail address is rinajimenez@gmail.com.

Wanted: human rights agenda

LETTERS

THE EDITORIAL ARTICLE "SP HAS MOST PAN-overseers in 2008, says Norway group" (Inquirer, 6/20/09) should serve as a strong reminder to all 20 10 electoral candidates of the grave importance of serious and human rights agenda amid the unresting civil war in the country which has caused death and displacement and violence, thus effectively silencing the country under an undeclared martial law.

The news article reported that the number of internally displaced persons in the southern part of the country reached 600,000 last year. But this figure taken from a Norwegian Refugee Council study (which already puts the country atop the list), documented only those displaced by the fighting between the Moro liberation groups and the government forces.

Forcible displacement also happens in other parts of Mindanao due to militarization (a la "Oplan Bantay Laya") and the "investment defense force policy" being enforced by the Arroyo administration, both of which are much-maligned, futile attempts to counter the rising insurgency in the country.

Along with an organization working with indigenous peoples in Mindanao, our experiences alone have shown us the brutal and inhumane face of these government policies. For instance, in southern Mindanao alone, we together with rights groups documented in 2008 (something validated by media reports) a series of internal displacements that victimized around 150 families of Ata-Manobo farmers or indigenous peoples, 400 families of Manobos formerly in Sagaraga, Davao Oriental; 100 families of Manobo and Mandaya farmers in New Bataan, Compostela Valley Province; 70 families of Dibabawon-Manobo farmers in Compostela-Monkayo swamp, Compostela Valley Province; and 50 Dibabawon families from Montevista.

Focusing on these figures would blind us to the terror that these victims and threat, internal displacement is but the result of horrifying crimes. Behind each instance of displacement is a crime against humanity—aerial bombardments, bamboozling, strafing, torture, extrajudicial executions, all done with impunity and absolute authority at the behest of the powers that be aiming to permit foreign and big local mining and hydropower and monocrop investors, at the cost of lives and to violation of the rights and culture of our indigenous brothers and sisters who are the genuine stewards of these mineral-rich lands.

As early as now, we are hearing presidential contenders and other 2010 hopefuls enumerate their platforms on health, education, employment, globalization, and graft and corruption. But we hardly hear anyone addressing the crisis for justice in the war-torn and neglected villages of the Moro people, Lumads and farmers.

We urgent voters, all those who stand for peace and human rights, to put a candidates' human rights and justice agenda as a priority qualification or basis for their choice of candidates in the coming 2010 elections.

—ESTELLO PASANTE,
Panaka Confederation of Lumad Organizations in Southern Mindanao,
Doña Inez Subd., Davao City

Post-2010 fears just below level of paranoia

CHURCH PEOPLE, THE OPPOSITION, the opportunistic, even the intellectual and political columnists of prominent dailies are afraid of the shadows of three men from President Macapagal-Arroyo will cling to power beyond 2010. Their fears are about one inch below the level of paranoia. Even well-known conservationists have put forward possible scenarios, which GMA herself has considered as an option.

Lastly, former President Fidel Ramos, who is known for his "wait and see" attitude before plunging into the best, said with obvious concern that he could not believe GMA's mind and political intentions.

But GMA's continued intellectual inability has proven very successful. GMA is just making a laughingstock out of her critics, and that's been profound for it. You can't separate out of her an answer to her political foes' flapping. She has her fingernails in the ceiling and she does the doing.

I fully agree with Bible style of governance: in the end, we will see that our country is not greatly affected by SONA'10, that our economy's dollar reserves have never been higher, that our economy is still strong enough perhaps (but the bandits do not touch the poor people, that democracy is alive even in the chirping of birds among her cliffs of Olympia, and that politics is a way of life for both the ordinary people and upper circles such that we tend to forget our battling communalities, our people in the mountains and our fisherfolk.

But many of those in GMA's circles, like—administration allies, opposition, church people, intellectuals—are all part of her intimates and we are all no longer for the desert of moral righteousness that spreads across the length and breadth of GMA's mind and political intentions.

Worse, Aquino-centrists, these people have been together, and they were their own separate ways only after they decided to jettison their conflicting individual self-interests. The only consistent axiom is that they are bonded by the unifying experiences, who espoused principles and convictions.

—BERNOC VALENZA,
Building 31, Room 014,
Bagong Lipunan Condominium,
Taguig City

Oxfam clarifies RP's role in climate talks

I REFER IN RESPONSE TO TER MEULE "RP urged to join alliance to reduce carbon emissions" (Inquirer, 6/30/09) to clarify Oxfam's position, and to provide background information that is essential for understanding the performance and positions of the Philippine government delegation to the intergovernmental climate change negotiations, going on under the auspices of the United Nations.

First, I wish to emphasize Oxfam's general view that the Philippine government played a positive and progressive role in the negotiations. What is not clear from the article—and other elements not to know—is that the Philippines was the first country to put forward a concrete proposal (early this year) for the mid-term emissions cuts necessary from each individual industrialized country. This proposal referred an even higher level of ambition than the proposal from South Africa, Brazil, China, India and other developing countries in the most recent negotiation session. Having such a bold proposal on the table early in the negotiating process has helped embolden the position of other developing countries, and also has lifted a critical party sitting out for inadequate countries such as the United States Union, Japan and the United States the level of ambition that they need to be aiming for.

Second, Filipinos need to know that their delegation has consistently played a central role in the alliance of developing countries known as the G77 & China—another point that doesn't come through clearly in the article. Like all countries negotiating for a stronger international climate regime, the Philippines forges its strategies, tactics and alliances on specific issues based on its specific national circumstances and interests. No doubt, the choice not to join the specific bloc of countries pushing for a 40-percent cut from industrialized countries by 2020 at the recent round of talks in Bonn reflects carefully considered judgment. More importantly, it is not necessarily incompatible with other alliance-building efforts with China or other developing countries that work under the G77 & China bloc in the run-up to Copenhagen.

The negotiation are far from over, and much remains to be done. Securing a fair and safe agreement in Copenhagen is critical to ensure that the millions and millions of poor people, who are already suffering most the climate impacts despite being least responsible for them. The Philippines is playing a critical role and should continue to do so.

—ANTONIO HILL,
senior policy advisor on climate change,
Oxfam International

It's a moral challenge

"Most jihadis are not in our Constitutional courts here." —Ramsey Clark, former US attorney general

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT, ITS STRUCtures and organization are an issue subsidiary to the rule of law. Without the rule of law, or the lack of it, how congressmen belonging to the majority party respect and adhere to the supreme law of the land gives us a glimpse of their motivations for proposing constitutional amendments or revisions and, subsequently, of how they will treat a new constitution. More telling is how they disregard widespread public opinion to further their questionable agenda.

If good faith is the measure, then they have already failed the test. They want constitutional change, but they show more and more that they are ungodly unconstitutional. They argue for the legal processes but engage in legal machinations. They speak of hope and economic prosperity yet they are silent on the issues of justice and equity. For them truth and justice must yield to political expediency and opportunism. Recall the Garci tapes, NBN-ZTE scandal, Jocjoc Bolante scam, etc. Charter change at this time will not help and heal this suffering nation whose wounds they themselves have inflicted.

The most overwhelming problem in our country here is not the form of government, but those in government—the practitioners and defenders of culture that allow unbridled corruption and their insatiable greed for material wealth, political influence and power. They weaken our institutions, thus aggravating structural injustice. It is therefore logical to conclude that this indeed is a moral problem in need of a moral solution.

—P. BUENAVENTURA,
Olongapo City councilor and
Ang Kapatiran Party (ACK) presidential
candidate, pbdemocrat@gmail.com

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

NEA probers seek to cancel power deal

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Chief of correspondents
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A MACHINERY team of the National Electrification Administration (NEA) has recommended the cancellation of a 25-year power supply deal between an independent power producer (IPP) and an electric cooperative for being tainted with bribery and disadvantageous to consumers.

"There is enough evidence that there was [bribery] and the cooperative and its consumers stand to lose because of this," said lawyer Omar Mayo, head of the three-member team, in a phone interview on Sunday.

In its report, the team said it found proof that bribery was involved in the signing of a power supply agreement (PSA) between the Iloilo Electric Cooperative 3 (Ileco-3) and Applied Research Technologies Philippines (Artech) on April 21. The Inquirer obtained a copy of the report dated June 3.

Ileco-3 is the sole distributor of electricity in some 40,000 consumers in 23 towns in northern Iloilo.

The team noted "undue haste in entering into [the] contract," pointing out that it took only 16 days for the cooperative's board of directors to decide to accept the PSA while a consortium of electric cooperatives in Pasay and Occidental took four months to study and evaluate the offers of different IPPs.

The deal being acted on for 25 years "all the more necessitates the exercise of prudence to afford members consumers the best possible deal on the matter of electricity rates," the team said.

It was also "grossly disadvantageous" to consumers, it said, because it would result in high electricity rates and that consumers must also pay for power supplied by Artech in excess of demand.

The report has been submitted to NEA Administrator Edita Bueno for approval. A copy has been sent to the Office of the Ombudsman, which is conducting an investigation separate from the National Bureau of Investigation.

The controversy erupted last month when Ileco-3 president Mateo Baldoza said in a radio interview that he had received an envelope containing P75,000 from Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. in a meeting at the governor's house on April 17. Also present during the meeting were the cooperative's board of directors and representatives of Artech.

The money was given purportedly in exchange for signing the contract with Artech.

Baldoza in an interview with the Inquirer later changed his statement and said it was a woman from Antonik, not Tupas, who gave the money, and that he made a mistake during the radio interview. He said he could not identify the woman.

Baldoza said another P75,000 was given during a meeting on April 21 when the contract was signed by the board of directors.

Tupas has repeatedly denied the bribery allegations and blamed his political detractors and those with business interests in the power industry in Iloilo for orchestrating the controversy.

In an earlier phone interview, Antonik president and director Orlando Ty also denied the allegations, saying all of the company's transactions were above board. No woman from Antonik was present in the meeting at the governor's house, he said.

The NEA probe team, however, said Baldoza's change of statements "cannot obliterate the fact of bribery." He did not deny the act itself, it said.

Mayo, in the phone interview, said the team gave credence to Baldoza's statements because he was "no ordinary witness," citing the set-up president's record as a former municipal court judge. "He knows the legal implications of his statements," Mayo said.

IT'S A issue leaned the hardway for residents of Sitio Barbarasay, Barilacle village in Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya, who reportedly to get unsafe jobs collecting manganese ore from the mountains, only to be displaced by heavy equipment hired by mining operators.

Small miners ruin N. Vizcaya mountain

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

QUEZON, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Small-scale miners are ravaging this town's ore-rich mountains and turning them into virtual wastelands.

"They have destroyed the mountain, our roads and our rivers, cut down trees and cleared what used to be fertile farmlands. After they have taken the manganese of this area, they leave it in this unlivable state," Amber Jimeju, 38, a rice farmer, said.

Mining operations are also causing soil erosion, gradually burying low-lying farmlands and rivers.

Residents living near the mining site have raised alarm over the destruction of the mountains in the role-villages of Barbarasay in Barangay Bonfacio, caused by what they said was unregulated extraction of manganese.

They sought the help of officials in neighboring Bagabag town, over a looming flash flood in the village as large rocks started appearing in the soil embankment of a silt nation pond, and eroded mud from the mining operations.

"We are alarmed because many rains in the coming days will fill the pond and the assurance that soil wall will collapse, then gasoline and even mud [alongside] farms below, as well as the rivers downstream, will be buried," Dimijo said.

Since 2005, at least four companies have taken turns in extracting manganese from the area. The old privately have not been removed due to evidence they committed in their operations, said Francis Tolentino, provincial head of the environment and natural resources office.

The manganese-mining site spans about 100 hectares in the foothills of the Dalali mountain range, near the border of Quezon and Bagabag towns. It is divided into 25 barrows areas which are covered by existing or cancelled mining permits, as well as pending applications.

The current permit holder, Samahan ng Maglalakbang Minero Inc. (SAMI), suspended operations and abandoned the area reportedly due to the difficulty of access in and out of the mine site.

Villagers, however, blamed SAMI for the poor roads. They said it was the company's trucks that damaged the roads, especially during rainy days.

Instead of using manual labor, SAMI had used excavators in digging up manganese, depriving locals of employment.

The Inquirer on Monday could not talked to reach officials of SAMI for comment.

"Many of us agreed to the mining operation because of the promises of job opportunities, better roads, and that the land will be given back to us. We now see what we have brought ourselves into, and its too late," said a 56-year-old resident, who briefly worked for SAMI. He asked not to be named for fear of his safety.

Tolentino said his office had not been monitoring SAMI's reported violations on its environmental compliance certificate because this was the task of the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

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Ex-casino workers seek payment of back pay

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—WITH the recent closure by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) of several foreign-owned hotels and a casino here, former employees are clamoring for payment of back wages and benefits before the firm's remaining assets are taken by receivership.

Romeo Castle, spokesperson for the disgruntled employees of Legend International Resorts Ltd. (LIRL), said the employees feared that nothing would be left to them after the creditors of the Hong Kong-registered company divide its assets to cover its debts.

"The more than [some] the more than 300 employees left working at LIRL's remaining establishments," Castle said.

Rehabilitation plan

In 2008, foreign investors and local stockholders of former of LIRL, like the SBMA and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), agreed to a corporate rehabilitation plan for the company that ultimately failed to restore its profitability.

Due to this, Castle said the LIRL management decided to cut regular employees on a rotation basis.

"One of the first things they did is to suspend our salaries and benefits, and then they employed us on a rotation basis. Then we were retrenched when we did not accept to work on casual employment because we had already been working there for years," he said.

Most of LIRL's 700 employees who lost their jobs in 2007 filed a case of illegal dismissal with the National Labor Relations Commission. "But [the] the case[] is get stuck in appellate court, especially when the New Ivan was facilitated when they retrenched us," Castle said.

He said more than 200 employees lost their jobs in 2008 when Pagcor revoked LIRL's gaming license when the firm failed to pay more than P1 billion it owed the government.

"I understand that the casinos had debts to Pagcor, but the locals still had plenty of customers," he said.

On Friday, the SBMA shut down and barricaded LIRL's establishments due to nonpayment of arrears.

Lawyer Robert Orgulnics, SBMA-Legacy administrator for legal affairs, said LIRL had over P200 million cash in bank, "excluding their movable and [fixed] assets."

However, Orgulnics said the SBMA cannot yet seize control of LIRL's property. "That is another matter for the court to decide," he said.

He said the SBMA was collecting more than P600 million from LIRL.

Brian Tolosa, the local representative of LIRL's liquidators in Hong Kong, said the issue "should be discussed in the proper forum." Robert Ismerio, Inquirer Central Luzon

Doc slain because of his activism, say peers

DAVAO CITY—SPERMEOLOgist Dr. Rogelio Pelera was killed because of his activism, his colleagues insisted on Saturday.

Dr. Jonathan Flavida, chair of the Alliance of Health Workers (AHW), said Pelera had rallied people to the sector against issues that threatened their welfare and the delivery of health services to the poor.

Pelera was driving home with his daughter on Wednesday night when he was ambushed near his house in Catalunan village here. He died from multiple bullet wounds to the head and body, while his daughter suffered minor injuries.

Order of battle

Former Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Virador said Pelera, a council member of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) chapter here, might have been marked for execution in a top-posed military order of battle. The list was made public here in May by Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo.

The military has since denied the existence of an order of battle. Maj. Gen. Galileo Gabaog Kintz, spokesperson of its Eastern Mindanao Command, said he could not understand why it was easy for militants to point an accusing finger at the military.

Rx for Peace

Dr. Jean Grubi, a member of the Rx for Peace, said that Pelera, as chair of the AHW in the 1990s, opposed Executive Order No. 1008 mandating the incorporation of the Department of Health.

The slain physician was also an active member of Pinga (Health People United for the Renewal of Hope), a group of medical practitioners and health workers calling for the resignation of President Maca pagal-Arroyo.

At the time of his death, he was at the helm of the campaign against the latest influenza strain A(H1N1) in southern Mindanao.

Efficient and dedicated

Dr. Leopoldo Vega, head of the Davao Medical Center, described Pelera as an efficient and dedicated co-worker.

Supt. Antonio Rivera, public information officer of the city police, said reports that investigators had found no evidence so far to solve the killing.

"It's still a blank wall. Unless we can get very substantial information, which could lead us to witnesses and evidence, then the investigation will stop," saying the way it should. We are still gathering information and evidence," Rivera said. Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

DOTC approves seaport for Pangasinan

DAGUPAN CITY—PANGASINAN will soon have an international seaport after the Department of Transportation and Communications gave it the green light to construct the facility in Sual town.

Gov. Amado Espino Jr. said Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, in their recent conversation, had told him that he had already given his approval to start construction.

The project will be a joint venture with the national government, and the host provincial and town will fund and manage the construction and operations of the port, Espino said.

Under the scheme, the provincial government will have a counterpart of P200 million and P100 million, respectively, while the national government's Philippine Ports Authority and the DOTC will shell out P300 million each.

"This is a big seaport project, a dream that is coming true," Espino said.

He said it was ironic that fuel and fertilizer are unloaded at Port Bataan in San Fernando City in La Union, or in Subic, Zambales, although Pangasinan had over 60 percent share of demand of these products in the Ilocos region.

He said the seaport would be built in a new location on the island Bay, a cove and a natural harbor that opens up to the Lingayen Gulf and to the international navigational lanes in the South China Sea.

"It will be parallel to the existing port of the [Sual] coal-fired power plant. But it will have service zone," he said.

With the seaport, Espino said the province would gain huge benefits like employment opportunities, tapping of support services, building of new industries, expanding of mineral products and "opening of new windows of other opportunities that will bring a lot of economic activities in Pangasinan."

He said at least 30 hectares had already signified their intention to set up businesses around the port. Gabriel Cardisnas, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Editor Tobbyboy S. Melendrez • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ortiz

SPORTS

Federer eyes slot in last 8

Venus battles Ivanovic

LONDON—ROGER FEDERER WILL have happy memories of his last encounter with Davide Rubin Sanberg at Roland Garros and will be hoping for a similar outcome when he opens the play on Wimbledon's Center Court on Monday.

The Swiss master swept past Sanberg to clinch his 14th grand slam title earlier this month, a performance to convincing on what is statistically Federer's weakest surface that the 27-year-old is a big favorite to reach the last eight.

British world number three Andy Murray will again play last on the main Court once against Swiss maestro and will take on Spain's number seven seed Fernando Verdasco in a race in the firing line for Croatian ace marathon Ivo Karlovic.

The line judges will again need lightning reflexes to dodge the bullets from another massive server, American Andy Roddick, who is last on court against Czech Tomas Berdych.

Jessica Williams finds herself on Court Two where she faces the unseeded Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia. That match is followed by former champion Lleyton Hewitt of Australia up against Czech Radek Stepanek.

Serbia's world number four Ivanik Ljubicic is the latest top four player consigned to an outside court. The 2008 Australian Open champion plays Dutch Seb of Israel on Court Nine.

Worthy remarking the big seven contenders in the men's game requires a big adjustment on grass, seeded seventeen three on the women's side. Among those reaching the ladies' fourth round were 17-year-old American Melanie Oudin in her Wimbledon debut; 19-year-old Sabine Lisicki of Germany who won a match on grass for the first time Sunday; 19-year-old Victoria Azarenka of Belarus; and 16-year-old Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark. *AP Reuters*

Lift player Melanie Oudin, who scored world No. 4 Jelena Jankovic of Serbia in the third round, is one of four teenagers coming active in the final 16.

Alcantara, new partner begin bid vs US tandem

By Jasmine W. Payo

FILIPINO ACE FRANCIS CASEY ALCANTARA opens his bid for a second Grand Slam title partner Nikola Ishelin of South Africa in the Wimbledon boys' doubles starting Monday (Tuesday in Manila) at the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

Montcourt and Ishelin, seeded in the tournament, will go up against the fourth-ranked American pair of Evan King and Jesse Kadla in the opening round, just two days after the 17-year-old Filipino dropped out in the first round of the boys' singles event.

The first Filipino to win a Grand Slam title by teaming up with Hsieh Cheng-Peng of Chinese Taipei in the Australian Open in the boys' doubles, Alcantara continued to struggle in the singles, absorbing a 2-6, 6-1, 3-6 loss against Australia's Maverdikan Sinyebtra on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

Alcantara also bowed out in the first round of the boys' singles in the Australian Open, losing to Slovenia's Daniel Berta and against Argentina's Agustin Velotti in the recent French Open.

But the doubles event remains Alcantara's forte with the Cagayan de Oro native now boasting of five titles in the event this year.

He has already picked up five titles this year, including his Montcourt triumph in the Australian Open with partner Hsieh Cheng-Peng of Chinese Taipei last January.

Pitch Hsieh, Alcantara also captured the doubles crown in the Aldo David Bowl Charlotte, Belgian International Junior Championships in Belgium.

Alcantara also won with Berta in the 13th Sarawak Chief Minister's Cup-ITF World Junior Tennis Championships in Malaysia and the 28th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Championships in the Philippines and with Chinese Taipei's Huang Liang-chi in the 17th International Junior Tournament of Offenbach/Main in Germany.

ROSALES

Shin takes 5th crown; J-Ro ties for 32nd

SOUTHOLD, NEW YORK—SOUTH KOREAN Jeon Shin picked up her fifth title in 11 months with a seven-under victory at the Wegmans LPGA on Sunday.

The 21-year-old star from Seoul shot a 1-under 71 in Round 4 in a close game at 17-under 271. Kristy McPherson and Inbee Park ended close behind, the latter's best score, to merge into a second-place tie at 14 under. One behind were Japan's Mika Miyazato (71) and rookies Hanji Kang (72) of South Korea and Stacy Lewis (74), the former NCAA champion from Arkansas.

First-round leader Sandra Gal (74) of Germany bogeyed the last hole to drop into a four-way tie for seventh place at 9 under with Cristie Kerr (68), Meaghan Francella (70) and Jiyai Shin Young Yoo (72).

The Philippines' Jennifer Rosales closed with another 2-over par-74 to finish in a tie for 32nd at 7-under 280. She won $11,745 (approximately P558,000).

"I have a lot of tournaments left to play this year and maybe I try more wins," said Shin, who again dedicated her victory to her mother, who was killed in an auto accident in 2004. "Still, my goal is rookie of the year."

Shin carried a four-stroke lead into the final round at the stroky Locust Hill course. She never looked in danger of losing caught, even when she picked up two straight bogeys near the close as heavy rain produced a flurry of errors.

She earned $166,000, reaching her career top of the money list above Kwi Ju Ryong Kim and Lorena Ochoa with $1 million. *AP*

Nat'l Open chess July 2 at Victory Mall

THE VICTORY CENTRAL MALL NATIONAL Open chess championships will be held July 2 to 8 at the fourth floor of the Victory Central Mall in Caloocan City.

Instead of chess organizers, however, the organizing National Chess Federation of the Philippines has decided to reduce it to two be continuing Groups 4 and 8 tuns on Open divisions with no rating requirements.

The winners, though, were continued to become bigger with the champion getting P100,000 and a trophy. Prizes have been broken among the top 15 players with the runner-up getting P60,000 plus trophy and the third placer P40,000 plus trophy.

The children division, open for players 14 years and below, offers P7,000 plus trophy to the champion. The runner-up and third placer gets P5,000 and P3,000, respectively plus trophies.

For inquiries, call 361-7224, NCFP executive-director Willie Alabat at 0920-2356820, 0905-3269976 or the NCFP secretariat at 0927-7290080 and 0920-214 3089.

Shell Active 2nd leg listup ongoing

REGISTRATION FOR THE SECOND LEG OF the 2009 Shell National Youth Active Chess Championship slated on July 4 and 5 in Tagaytay City is now ongoing with the field limited to the first 500 entries.

The Northern Luzon elimination will be held at the Baco Bunk's Fourteen hall at Blastcenter Agoncillo driveway.

Open to all Filipino players residing, competitions is expected to be between the 11-and-under and 20-and-under age group categories with the top three finishers in both divisions advancing to the Manila national finals in October.

To join, log on to www.shell.com.ph. Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis with a P50 fee. For details, contact Mariano Calicdan at (0917) 894-0213 or Alta Tiney at (0922) 8289514 or (632) 894-6402/882.

Warning to the secretary general of the Fiba

Mr. Patrick Baumann
Secretary General
International Basketball
Federation (Fiba)

BARE EYE

Bercab Trinidad

Dear Sir,

Please accept my sincere greetings from the republic of the Philippines, where basketball is played and followed with religious intensity.

Please consider this as a letter from a fan of the Fiba.

We may not be aware of this, sir, but you have become a son of love to many Filipino sports devotees after you came to virtually single-handed the raging basketball leadership issue nonetheless.

Let me assure that your effort in helping establish the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas has led to significant reforms that have helped Philippine basketball recover from years of neglect.

Philippine basketball is now in the midst of what could be called a robust development.

I want you have been sufficiently assured of these great developments, even before the SBP came out with full page newspaper advertisements last week.

Let me assure you, sir, that these advertisements were put out to stir awards straight, and move to defy the Fiba or put anybody or any institution in a bad light.

It saddens me that there's currently widespread fears here in my country over a possible Fiba ban or suspension following the SBP's refusal to submit itself to the jurisdiction of a special commission that will meet in Geneva on July 28 to 22.

SBP president Manny Pangilinan had earlier asked that duty, at least, be informed of "the rules of court and how they would judge us."

At things went, the SBP would've agreed to be scrubbed or punished for an indictment look or violation if it attended the commission meeting.

Mr. Pangilinan said they were not coming "unless the Fiba clears to us the real mandate, jurisdiction and scope of authority."

Knowing Mr. Pangilinan, he would not take that unreasonable stand if he had at least been told what they had to answers for.

Of course, it can't be denied that there had been some imperfections with the SBP like the untimely exit of Mr. Jorge, who left to join the PBA.

But let me assure you that this slip was more of an exception than a rule in the SBP.

What's truly alarming in this report that Go Teng Kok, special assistant to the president of the Philippine Olympic Commission, was able to reach base with the Fiba before commission was issued to SBP to subject itself to the special commission.

As you obviously did not have the time and chance to do a character check on Go, he has just committed the dastardly act of disqualifying a legally elected president of the inorganic Cycling Federation of the Philippines.

For the record, the oft-powerful Go himself supervised this election that was ordered by the POC.

However, he was reminded a promising sportsman by forcing him to accept the illegitimate cycling presidency in order to cover up for his violation.

* * *

This is the same Go Teng Kok who, in 1990, got literally dumped out of the office of the Commissioner of the Philippine Basketball Association after he suggested to the man in authority to manipulate the result of the second game of the Governor's Cup basketball championship.

Learning had lost the first match to an unsanctioned league and Go wanted either a reversal or a triple result in Game 2 "so many would take it in Game 3."

You're free to challenge this in front of the PBA men in authority who said he had one session's breakdown as witness to the incident.

Sorry, sir, for casting much of new slate.

However, I found it my duty to inform you that you would be giving Philippine basketball back to the pale of partisan campaigning as sports leaders if you fail to dent home play.

Respectfully,

Bercab Trinidad
pr_sports@inq.net.com.ph

HEADS-UP PLAY Head tennis ace Cainta "Tots" Carlos shows his trophy after wrapping up the 14-and-under championship of the recent 2nd Ballesteros-Jose Sr. Memorial Cup at the Real Memorial Tennis center in Manila. An Ateneo High School student and a mainstay of the RP team in the World Junior Championships in Bunting, Malaysia last May, Carlos is shown with Johnny Jose, the tournament's executive director and head of the national coaching staff. Carlos wrapped up Ryn Acosta, 7-5, 4-6, 6-3, in the finals.

RP 3-on-3 dribblers open AYG campaign

SINGAPORE—THE FIRST ASIAN Youth Games ushered with much fanfare Monday night at the Singapore Indoor Stadium here despite the influenza A(H1N1) scare that prompted a member country to back out from competition for athletes aged 14 to 17 years old.

A total of 23 countries, including the Philippines—composed of 34 athletes, 10 coaches and three officials—took part in the two-hour long ceremony.

Denice Therese Jose, a 16-time High School basketball player who is the daughter of former pro Bobby, won 80% flag bearer while high jumper Joaquin Vincent Rotter was one of the torch bearers.

The opening rites remained festive despite the Malaysia Ministry of Education's decision not to send the rest of its contingent to the AYG due to the flu scare. Officials said, however, that they will not withdraw their football and netball teams.

Competition goes full throttle today with eight gold medals—two in diving and six in athletics—up for grabs. A total of 99 gold medals are at stake.

The Filipino dribblers take on Iran at 9:45 a.m. and Mongolia at 3:30 p.m. while archer Pilea Ann-J female counterpart is collide with Kazakhstan at 12:25 p.m.

Blazers tame Great Danes; Chiefs score

By Cedelf F. Tejan

COMPOSURE ISN'T EXACTLY ONE OF THE ST. BENILDE BLAZERS' strongest suits the past few years.

But it turned out to be the security blanket that separated them from feisty newcomer Angeles University Foundation yesterday.

The Blazers, who have not reached the Final Four since 2002, flirted with disaster before pulling away late in the fourth quarters for an 87-76 victory over the defending Great Danes in the 85th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Arena in San Juan.

In a bundle of defending squads, Archt. Jaime Honrado's mechanical contraption that had the league taking notice, whipping Emilio Aguinaldo College, 85-63.

The Blazers and Chiefs joined opening-day winners San Beda, Jose Rizal U and San Sebastian on top of the standings after two playing dates.

Nine ADF key players looked out, particularly reigning Rizal Mr. U, Benedict Joshua Angeles Montecastro and Chiefs Dalmore, who combined for 33 of the Blazers' last 38 points.

Montecastro finished with 20 points and Dalmore added 16 for the Blazers, who retained 33-of-61 free throws.

"I'm happy with the effort of the players," said St. Benilde new coach Archard del Rosario. "It feels so good to win the first game but we have to work on our turnovers and free throws drowning."

Hood their impressive Adrian Dalida fired a game-high 30 points as the Archt. Jaime Chiefs outscored the Generals, 53-32, in the second and third quarters to put the game to bed going into the final period, 64-36.

"I told the players to stay aggressive and work hard," said Archt.'s first-year coach Angelo Alkas, whose squad forced 29 turnovers that led to 27 points. "Everyone just stepped up today."

Earlier, St. Benilde-La Salle Greenhills crushed AMA (117-41), and strike-over-whelmed BSC, 83-63, in junior play.

Coming off a two-hour bus ride from Angeles City, the Great Danes looked sloppy right from the start and the Blazers greeted them with a 13-3 opening salvo spearheaded by Montecastro.

The Great Danes committed 10 turnovers in their deficit goals in the first half and were limited to just 33 field goals in the first two quarters.

But they hung tough behind Mon Carmen, Gerwin Mahusay and Arnel Factoran, whose layup got the Great Danes within one point, 26-27.

Factoran led the Great Danes with 16 points.

The scores:

First Game (m)

ADNU 76 — Mahusay 17, Pator 10, Factoran 16, Jacinto 10, Segarra 6, Ayo 6, Tagaro 1, Sta. Maria 0, Lee 0, Tabagoño 2, Dalida 4, Arellano 0, Diaz 2, Alfaro 17, Salvacion 0

ADF 85 — Gesolgon 12, Limcolioc 6, Rivera 1, Bahia 0, Jacinto 2, Dandoy 2, Ayo 0, Sangco 0, Lacanlale 0, Quinto 0, Montecastro 20, Dalmore 16, Ilagan 0, Sangco 0, Lacanlale 0, Quinto 0, Montecastro 20, Dalmore 16, Ilagan

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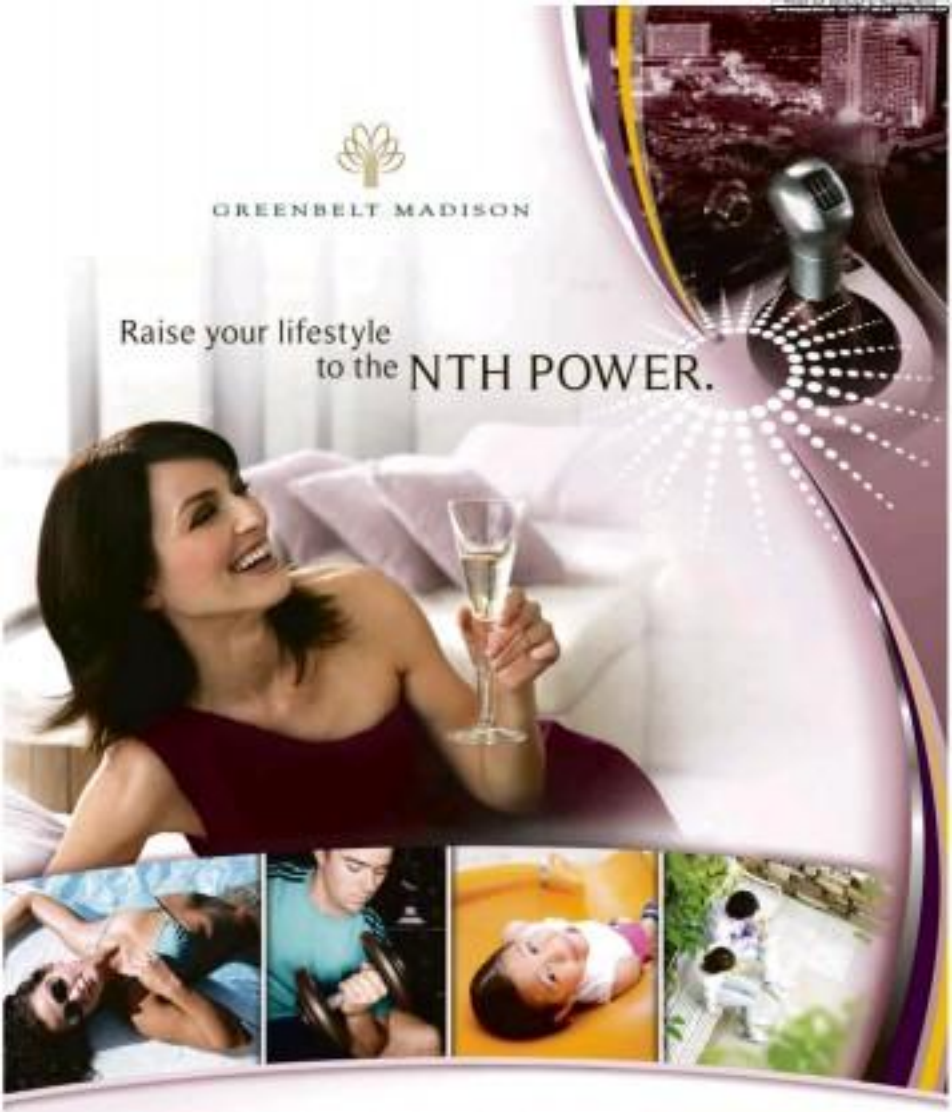

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NEW PASIG POLICE CHIEF VOWS TO KEEP AN EYE ON FORMER SHABU 'TIANGGE' SITE

Police to watch drug den 24/7

By DJ Yap and Miss Catherine Calleja

THE NEWLY INSTALLED OFFIcer-in-charge of the Pasig Police Station yesterday said he plans to put up an outpost at Maguayapa Compound, the alleged den of drug traffickers which was raided by narcotics operatives earlier this month.

Senior Supt. Napoleon Villegas said a team of about four police officers, supported by civilian watchmen, would stand watch at the compound to monitor the illegal drug trade and other criminal activities in the area.

"This way, the residents who live there will finally be able to sleep at night," he said in an interview.

Villegas said the outpost need not be a permanent structure, but could be a simple moveable tent but to be manned by police officers and members of the city's Barangay Disaster Response Office on a 24-hour basis.

The official who formerly headed the Eastern Police District Mobile Force said drugs and other criminal activities would be the focus of his attention as the new police chief.

Villegas replaced Senior Supt. Emmet de Jesus, who was relieved of his post two months after agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) raided three houses at the site of the infamous shabu "Tiangge (Drug market)" at Maguayapa Compound June 19.

The early morning raid led to the seizure of five half-filled sachets of a white crystalline substance believed to be methamphetamine hydrochloride, locally known as shabu, worth Pl.5 million.

The compound was first raided by narcotics on Feb. 10, 2006, after they received information that it had become a major source of shabu in the country. More than 300 people were arrested during the operation while more than 200 were later charged for violating the anti-drug law.

In a related development, the head of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) called for more co-operation with PDEA in dealing with drug cases in their respective areas.

Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales said the success in a phone interview yesterday that the relief of the Pasig police chief should serve as a lesson to other police officials.

"The proliferation of drug dens could be easily prevented through intensified police visibility" Rosales said, adding that local police units play an important role in the Philippine National Police's campaign against illegal drugs.

"All actions should be coordinated with the PDEA and the police chiefs should see to it that after an operation, the exact regular drug suspects would hold station," he stressed.

DID YOU KNOW

In 1950, then President Manuel L. Quezon asked Dwight D. Eisenhower, an American soldier assigned to the Philippines, to become chief of police of the newly created Quezon City. Eisenhower declined the offer as his tour of duty was ending in ten months. More than a decade later, Eisenhower became President of the United States.

Cyril J. Bautista, Inquirer Research

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MASS WEDDING
Hendrywin Jan Ablan, 33, and Lolita Regalado (center) kiss after exchanging vows during yesterday's mass wedding in a suite in Manila. Ablan, who has 7 children and 17 grandchildren, and Lolita are among the 300 couples who said their vows in a ceremony sponsored by the Manila City government.

Tiñga: Taguig not a drug hot spot, according to NCRPO

By Nina Catherine Calleja

TAGUIG CITY MAYOR SIXTO TIÑGA yesterday branded as "malicious" a councilor's statement that the drug trade in the city was flourishing as he promised that more drug dealers would be arrested in the next days.

Tiñga, who is in Malaysia, said through the city public information officer that Councilor Arsito Alili's statement was obviously meant to fuel his political ambitions.

"This is early politicking. It is sad that certain people would seem to tarnish Taguig's image for their self-interest," Ana Trinidad, head of Taguig's public information office, told the business.

Alili said the other day that the arrest of Joel Tiñga, who claimed to be related to the mayor, was proof of the city government's failure to stop the growing drug menace in Taguig, where illegal drugs are reportedly peddled even in universities.

"It has been in the news that Taguig is a drug hot spot. But the NCRPO (National Capital Region Police Office) and PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency) say otherwise," Ana said.

In a recent letter to Mayor Tiñga, NCRPO director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosario said the Taguig police have been actively campaigning against illegal drugs, conducting 136 anti-drug operations since January 2008 and filing 388 cases against drug pushers and users.

Rosario' letter was in response to a request made by the city administration office for a clarification on reports that Taguig was a drug "hot spot."

"Taguig is not a 'hot spot' in illegal drugs. We are aware of the extent of the drug problem in the whole of Metro Manila, and together with the local government units, PDEA and other government agencies, we will intensify our campaign against the drug trade," Rosario said in his letter dated June 23.

Alarcon, meanwhile, said that all of the six Tiñga aides Alili had claimed were related to the mayor, were detained in different jails after being arrested for illegal drugs. He added that none of them was receiving special treatment.

Triumph vows to honor financial obligations to 1,662 workers facing layoff

By Marlon Ramos

TRIUMPH INTERNATIONAL yesterday said it would not abandon its financial obligation to the 1,662 workers who would lose their jobs when the German-Swiss garment company shuts down its operations in the country on Aug. 28.

Labor Secretary Marianito Roque said Triumph officials gave him this assurance during a meeting at the garment firm's headquarters in Taguig City.

Roque said he was "shocked" upon learning that one of the world's leading manufacturers of women's undergarments and lingerie was set to close shop after operating in the Philippines for 15 years.

He added that in the past few months, the garment industry has been slowly recovering from the effects of the world-wide financial downturn as orders for clothing and garment products were gradually increasing.

"I did not expect it to happen. It was really shocked because we are now at the tail-end of the effects of the global financial crisis on the garments industry," he told the business.

"But there's nothing much we can do. Company officials said they were losing badly as demand for underclothing and lingerie went down because people, especially Europeans, are cutting on their supposedly items," Roque added.

The labor secretary said Triumph employees who had served the company for more than 20 years were among those who would be displaced.

He added that Triumph executives told him that the garment firm would also close down its factory in Manila Bulletin and Technical while it would replace its workforce in Hong Kong.

The labor secretary said representatives from his department were yesterday with company officials and union officers to discuss the severance pay for displaced workers.

He added that the labor department would help the affected employees look for other job opportunities.

MetroBriefs

Man shot dead; body dumped on street

THE (48) FAMED body of a man believed to be a victim of summary execution was found before dawn yesterday in Manila. The body, which was wrapped in canvas and packaging tape, bore a bullet wound in the head and ligature marks around the neck. PO2 Crispino Ocampo of the Manila Police District (MPD) homicide section described the unidentified man as between 30 and 35 years old, around 5'1" in height, fair-skinned, of medium build and clad only in his underwear. The victim also had several tattoos, including that of a skeleton on the right arm. MPD homicide section experts said the body was discovered at around 2:15 a.m. yesterday at the corner of Juan Luna and Lacson Streets in Sta. Mesa. He is a security guard. It was later taken to the Universal Funeral Home for autopsy.

Jeannette I. Andrade

NFA employee killed

AN EMPLOYEE of the National Food Authority was shot dead by two assailants on Sunday night after he attended a friend's wedding in Quezon City. The victim was identified as Ismael Salvacion, 40, a resident of 386 Orion St., Diamond Commonwealth, Cayo Homologation POI near Commonwealth Avenue. Initial investigation showed that Salvacion was with three friends at Commonwealth Avenue corner San Simon Street in Barangay Holy Spirit at around 9:40 p.m. Sunday. The victim had just attended a wedding party and was waiting for a bus when he was shot.

John M. Aurelio

Peacemaker dies after hitting head on pavement

MEDIATING in an argument cost a man his life in Caloocan City on Sunday evening. Jose Arroyo, 42, died when he fell and hit his head on the pavement after he was punched in the face. The Caloocan police said they were looking for Troy Virginio, Arroyo's neighbor in Barangay 88. Caloocan City, who fled after the said. The police said Arroyo had tried to break up an argument between Virginio and a 15-year-old boy. He gave brief to punch the boy but hit the victim instead.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Man stabbed dead over television

A 40-YEAR-OLD man was killed in a fight with his neighbor on Sunday night in Manila. Jorge Olivarez, a resident of 1802 Interior 20 F. Ramos St. in Tondo, was pronounced dead on arrival by doctors at the Ospital ng Maynila. Manila Police District (MPD) operatives have launched a hunt for Salvador Salido, 48, who managed to escape. PO2 Crispino Ocampo of the MPD homicide section said that at around 10:30 p.m. Sunday, Olivarez was on his way home after watching television at Salido's house. Salido, however, chased him and told him that he didn't want to see him watching TV in his house again. The two argued and a scuffle ensued, ending with the victim being stabbed twice in the chest.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Petty politics in Tacloban City

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

I WENT TO TACLOBAN CITY over the weekend for the annual reunion of our high school class.

I am so fortunate to have finished high school in Tacloban, although my school is gone now, thanks, but no thanks to a fellow Taclobanon who is now a Court of Appeals justice.

My father was assigned to Leyte as assistant provincial commander of the defunct Philippine Constabulary that's why I studied in Tacloban, the capital of Leyte province.

If I didn't study in the Eastern Visayas city in my formative years, who knows, I could have turned out a weakling.

The Visaya/Waray word *waray* means "none" in English. Waray-waray literally translates "nothing-nothing" which is why I sometimes refer to myself as one.

Whenever life deals me a bad card, I stick to the one I learned from the Visayas as an adolescent.

What would life have been like if I had been a weakling?

* * *

Behind the tough Waray exterior is a very generous heart. A Waray mother encourages in his home to partake of food in his table during a dilemma.

I regret having to leave interesting the one of the city's finest — a classmate who died recently in the Tacloban cathedral.

But if ordinary Taclobanons are magnanimous, their leaders are petty.

Politicos in southern mindanao think in Mayor Alfred Romualdez disallowing the holding of the Pintakasi, a parade where participants, their faces painted, dance in the streets much like Aklan's Ati-atihan, last Saturday three days before the fiesta.

Romualdez did not honor a court order lifting his ban on the holding of the yearly parade.

The parade organizers, however, held the parade anyway in complete disobedience to the mayor's order.

On policemen, ordered to block the parade, would have clashed with fellow policemen assigned in the provincial office. The regional director who executed the Pintakasi revelers, but did not.

Why did the mayor try to prevent the holding of the yearly parade?

Because he had his own parade similar to the Pintakasi.

Pintakasi is sponsored by the provincial government, but the Perlas, whose family is an arch political rival of the Romualdezes.

Perlitos is supposed to match people's imaginations, but it's Tacloban City, it has made a petty tyrant.

The great politicians, Daniel Z. Romualdez, once a Speaker of the House of Representatives, a grand-uncle of the mayor's, must be turning in his grave.

* * *

Some Filipino guys were attacked in Saudi Arabia recently for cross-dressing.

How ironic for that country to hate homosexuals since most of its menfolk are gay who engage in sodomy!

In Saudi, if you are a businessman in Qatif's airport, seaport or board, you could get sodomized.

The Bedouin, the desert people of Saudi, are so depraved they even have sex with their sheep and camels.

I got some video clips of individuals who had sex with the sheep and camels.

Today is the start of the countdown for the President to step down from power.

That is, if she plans to step down.

On June 30, 2010, President Macapagal-Arroyo becomes Citizen Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Most Filipinos want her out of their lives even before then.

But we just have to bite the bullet in her remaining days in Malacañang.

Militants protest plan to revive LPG depot in Pasig

By CJ Yap

A GROUP OF URBAN POOR militants and residents picketed yesterday the offices of PH GAS, a leading supplier of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in the country, in protest of a supposed plan to revive an LPG depot in Pasig City.

For 20 minutes, members of the Pasig Urban Poor alliance, Alabayan Bagong Bag and Pasig Environmental Defenders staged a demonstration in front of the Orient Square Building at the Ortigas Center demanding that the firm scrap the plan.

The groups said they wanted to raise their concern "about a looming danger to the public safety and health of the people of Pasig City, particularly at Barangays Bagong Ilog, Ugong, Rosario and Kapitolyo."

"This danger is coming from the revival of an LPG depot in Barangay Bagong Ilog, Pasig by PH GAS, a leading LPG supplier in the country," the protesters said in a statement.

The groups said the depot sits on a 1.5 hectare land "in the midst of a community" and was located near the Sta. Rosa Parish church and school, as well as a number of factories and stores and eateries, and a mosque.

"It lies along the banks of Marikina River across which are located another big community in Barangay Caniogan and the large premises of Rizal High School," the groups said.

Mc Manera, barangay council member of Malinao, said the property used to be owned by Caltex Philippines, now Chevron, until it was donated to the University of the Philippines Business Research Foundation which in turn loaned the property to Chevron until 2030.

"Now it is loaned to PH GAS," the groups said, adding, "This is not to mention that we should not set up LPG depots. What we are saying is that the existing top of such depot should be in accordance with the latest international standards of safety practices and regulations in the LPG gas industry."

2 suspected robbers killed in shootout, 5 more escape

By Jeannette I. Andrade

TWO SUSPECTED MEMBERS of a robbery group were killed yesterday afternoon in a shootout with operatives of the Manila Police District (MPD). The police, meanwhile, said that five other gang members were able to escape.

The shootout also left a bystander wounded. Police director Nool Dequiña, 34, was caught in the crossfire and had to be taken to a nearby hospital for a gunshot wound in the leg.

MPD Station Patrol Unit (MPU) reports showed the encounter took place at around 2:30 yesterday at Gate 3-4 of the Pantranco terminal in Tondo, Manila, near the Manila International Container Terminal.

Before the shootout, operatives of the MPD-MPU who were on patrol spotted seven suspicious-looking men hanging around Gate 3 of the compound. When the policemen approached them, the seven fired at the lawmen. A shootout ensued, leaving two of the seven men, later identified as Edwin Dalisola and Dandy Cepio, dead.

BACK IN BUSINESS
Workers collect a big billboard on Edsa corner Sabella Street in Guadalupe, Makati City, days after Tropical Storm "Feria" leaves the country, resulting in an improvement in the weather.

New clashes in Iran; row with Britain escalates

CAIRO—IRAN'S GOVERNMENT said on Sunday that it had arrested Iranian employees of the British Embassy, while the police in Tehran beat and fired tear gas at several thousand protesters who joined a demonstration or a rampage in support of the defeated presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi.

The government's arrest of nine Iranian employees of the British Embassy was a significant escalation in its conflict with Britain, which Tehran has sought to cast as an instigator of the unrest since the disputed June 12 elections. It said the embassy employees played a significant role in organizing the protests, which have reached across the country and across social and economic lines.

Tehran also continued to charge journalists with working as agents of discord, publishing one editor's "confessions" while continuing to detain others without charge, or barred from working.

The arrests, detentions and restrictions added to Iran's growing international isolation, as European Union foreign ministers meeting in Corfu, Greece, seemed to a statement that there would be a "strong and collective EU response" to any intimidation of EU members' diplomatic staffs. The British Foreign Ministry said some of its personnel had been detained, but declined to provide details.

In spite of all the threats, the overwhelming show of force and the night-time raids on private homes, protesters still flowed into the streets by the thousands on Sunday to demonstrate in support of Mousavi.

The demonstrators were black, in mourn the 17 protesters killed by government-aligned forces, and chanted "Allahu akbar" or "God is great."

"There was a sea of people and the crowd stretched a long way into the main street on Vanak," said one witness, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he feared retribution.

What started as a peaceful demonstration turned into a spree of violence and chaos by late Sunday, witnesses said.

Some clashed scenes of brutality telling The Associated Press that nurse protestors suffered broken bones and alleging that the police beat an elderly woman. The reports could not be independently verified because of tight restrictions imposed on journalists in Iran.

"I think no one can predict Iran's political future," said an Iranian intellectual who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisal. "I do believe some things have changed after this recent upheaval and that events will play out in months and years to come."

The supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has ruled out any compromise with the opposition. AFP

THE ANCIENT structure at Wutaishan in China's Shanxi province, nestled at the sacred Buddhist mountain of Wutai, is among five new sites named to Unesco's World Heritage List. —

Unesco names 16 Heritage sites

SEOUL—LOCATIONS FROM THE 4th-century city of Carral-Supe in Peru to China's sacred Buddhist mountain of Wutai were among 16 that have been added to Unesco's World Heritage List, while a German area was removed.

The 16 sites, with half located in Europe, were named at Unesco's World Heritage Committee meeting in Seville, Spain, the UN agency announced on Saturday.

All the committee's choices however were not cause for celebration. It decided to drop Germany's Dresden Elbe Valley from the list because of the construction of a bridge there.

It had been a World Heritage Site since 2004 and was listed in part because the valley "has been the crossroads in Europe, in culture, science and technology," Unesco's website says.

Dresden was only the second property ever removed from the World Heritage List. Unesco said, after Oman's Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in 2007 was dropped because it reduced the size of the protected area by 90 percent.

Nearly 900 sites now form the World Heritage List, which is meant to signal "outstanding universal value."

The committee examined 27 potential sites at its meeting this week, while three locations were placed on the so-called danger list.

They included Belize's Barrier Reef Reserve system, in part due to excessive development, and Colombia's Los Katios National Park, threatened by deforestation.

Colombia had requested that the site be placed on the danger list to mobilize support for it, according to Unesco.

The Historical Monuments of Mtskheta in Georgia were listed as in danger due to concerns over their preservation.

Nine added to the World Heritage List in Europe included Britain's Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal in northeastern Wales, which the UN agency called "a feat of civil engineering of the Industrial Revolution."

France's Great Saltworks of Salins-les-Bains has been added as an extension to an other site inscribed in 1982. Brine has been extracted from the area since the Middle Ages, "If not earlier," Unesco said.

The Wadden Sea in Germany and the Netherlands was listed, with value Unesco described as "one of the last remaining natural, large-scale, intertidal ecosystems where natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed."

The Dolomites in the Italian Alps—"some of the most beautiful mountain landscapes anywhere," according to Unesco—became part of the list, as did Stoclet House in Belgium.

The Belgian banker's architecture "marked a turning point in Art Nouveau," it said.

Others in Europe included The Tower of Hercules in Spain, La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle watchmaking towns in Switzerland and Hevadjarv Lyceum, with a historic room interior.

The site honored in the Middle East was Iran's hydraulic system at Shushtar, with the organization calling it "a masterpiece of creative genius... Hand back to Darius the Great in the 5th century BC."

Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Kyrgyzstan were also listed for the first time.

Kyrgyzstan's Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain, Burkina Faso's Ruins of Loropeni and Cape Verde's Cidade Velha were all inscribed.

Other Asian sites were The Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty in Korea, and Yehanshin Birth Natural Park in the Philippines, inscribed as an extension to a site listed in 1993.

In the Americas, the famed City of Carral-Supe in Peru was added as the oldest center of civilization in the Americas. AFP

N. Korea finds 2nd way to make bombs

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—AFTER repeating negotiations on disarmament, North Korea announced in raw particle uranium—a simpler method of building nuclear weapons than reprocessing plutonium. Uranium can be enriched in relatively inconspicuous factories that are better suited up-and-the-door-ers, and uranium bombs may work without test explosions.

The announcement, made in a threatening response to a June 12 UN Security Council resolution punishing Pyongyang for an underground plutonium bomb test last month—poses a new challenge to the US, China, South Korea, Russia and Japan as they seek to stem the nefarious country's economic ambitions.

Since 2003, they have focused on persuading the North to dismantle a nuclear reactor outside of Pyongyang, where the communist regime had been laboriously extracting plutonium, not a naturally occurring material, from spent fuel rods.

Natural uranium, on the other hand, is readily available. North Korea has said it has an estimated 20 million tons of natural uranium deposits, of which about four million tons can be economically recovered. The Washington-based Federation of American Scientists also said an estimated 4 million tons is high-quality uranium ore.

That doesn't mean North Korea can make a uranium bomb overnight. The uranium must be highly enriched first, and making enough for a bomb requires operating 5,000 to 3,000 centrifuges for a year, said Jon Chuan-gyun, an expert at South Korea's state-funded Science and Technology Policy Institute.

But its recent announcement suggests the country has begun building its new device.

And since the weapons-grade enriched uranium is in hand, it is "significantly easier" to build a bomb from it than from plutonium, said Jean Lieberle, vice president of the Federation of American Scientists.

Uranium also can be enriched in a facility like an ordinary factory and doesn't release much heat compared with the plutonium production station at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang. That makes it difficult for spy satellites to detect, according to South Korea's Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control.

And testing is not as essential for bombs built from uranium as for plutonium bombs. The North has conducted two nuclear tests of plutonium-made bombs, in 2006 and in May, which drew international condemnation and garnered UN sanctions. AP

New cancer treatment found to work in animals

A NEW METHOD OF STARVING cancer cells, developed by researchers in Australia, has proved surprisingly effective in animal tests.

In one striking use of the method, reported online on Sunday in Science Translational Medicine, mice were implanted with a human ovarian tumor that was highly aggressive and resistant to many drugs. All of the treated animals were free of cancer cells after 78 days of treatment; the untreated mice were dead after a month.

The lead researchers, Dr. Jennifer A. MacDiarmid and Dr. Alexandra Brahmbhatt, say their company, Endocyte of suburban Sydney, has achieved a similar success in dogs with advanced brain cancer. "We have been treating more than 20 dogs and have spectacular results," Brahmbhatt said. "Every month every dog has responded, and some are in remission."

Cancer experts who were not involved with the research say that the new method is of great interest, but that many treatments that work well in laboratory mice turn out to be ineffective in patients.

Bert Vogelstein, a leading cancer researcher at Johns Hopkins University, called the method "a creative and promising line of research," but noted the general odds against success.

The Endocyte researchers were enthusiastic to deliver a variety of agents to tumor cells, including both anticancer toxins and mechanisms for suppressing the genes that make tumors resistant to toxins.

The molecules are generated from common bacteria, which, when they divide, pinch off small bubbles of cell membrane. The microbes can be loaded with chemicals and coated with antibodies that direct them toward tumor cells. NYT

Argentine dynasty fades in congressional election

PRESIDENT CRISTINA Fernandez de Kirchner

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA—Argentina's first couple appeared to be heading for defeat on Sunday with early returns showing steep losses for their allies in Congress. Now former President Nestor Kirchner was trailing in a congressional race he launched in a desperate bid to control their party's future.

With 80 percent of the ballots counted, Kirchner—President Cristina Fernandez's husband and predecessor—had 32.2 percent of the vote in his bid for a seat from Buenos Aires province.

Leading rival Francisco de Narvaez of the Union Pro alliance, a charismatic millionaire and driving conservative who is part of a growing anti-Fernandez faction in the president's Peronist party, was ahead with 36.7 percent.

"I said one day we would change history, and that day is today," a euphoric Narvaez said at his campaign headquarters. "The bad policies of old has been defeated."

Fernandez and Kirchner-allied candidates also trailed in key races in the city of Buenos Aires and Cordoba and Santa Fe provinces.

"With these results... the ruling party would lose control of the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate is also at risk," analyst Rosendo Fraga told news channel Todo Noticias.

Allies of Fernandez and Kirchner have controlled Congress for six years, but before the vote analysts predicted they could lose two dozen seats in both chambers, hurting their ability to push through legislation and damaging their brand as their Peronist party seeks direction ahead of 2011's presidential vote.

Kirchner said his congressional race and the election as a whole is a referendum on his wife's economic policies to have seen the seat as a launching pad for his own return to the presidency.

A Kirchner loss would weaken Fernandez's government, dilluting her authority and limiting all's power struggle within her party ranks, Daniel Kerner, Latin America analyst for Eurasia Group, wrote in a research note last month.

It could also jeopardize Kirchner's leadership of the Peronist party, a position he has held since Fernandez succeeded him as president in 2007. AP

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INQUIRER

Monthly, our Research Department will collate the results which will be posted in the business. Entries filled with good thinking/creative ideas/innovative approach/ provocative opinion will receive surprise prizes.

The WORLD

Editor Lenaeus B. Guzon

Jackson had faint pulse when found, says doctor

LOS ANGELES—MICHAEL JACKSON STILL HAD a faint pulse and his body was warm when his doctor found him in bed and not breathing, a lawyer for the doctor told The Associated Press on Sunday.

Edward Chernoff said the AP that Murray was at the pop icon's rented mansion on Thursday afternoon when he discovered Jackson in bed and not breathing. The doctor immediately began administering CPR, Chernoff said.

"He just happened to find him in his bed, and he wasn't breathing," the lawyer said. "Mr. Jackson was still warm and had a pulse."

Jackson's family requested a private autopsy in part because of questions about Murray. Pete Aguilar said he could not say why Murray also told the family an autopsy should be performed, Chernoff said.

Three days after the death of the King of Pop, celebrities descended on Los Angeles for a spectacular celebration of Jackson's life at the annual BET awards show.

Jim Brickman, Michael's father, walked on the red carpet wearing a black hat, sunglasses and a dark suit. He did not appear on stage during the show.

"I just wish he could be here to celebrate himself," he said. "Sadly, he's not here, so I'm here to celebrate for him."

In a statement read at the show, Jackson's parents said they solely had the personal and legal "authority for our son and his children." It was their strongest declaration yet about their son's affairs.

A tearful Janet Jackson appeared on stage in a tribute dress at the end of the BET awards. After a long pause to gather herself, she spoke haltingly but distinctively to the audience.

"It's just like to say that to you, Michael is no more. To us, Michael is family. And he will forever live in all of our hearts," she said.

People close to Michael Jackson have said since his death that they were concerned about his use of painkillers. Los Angeles County medical examiners conducted their autopsy on Friday and said Jackson had taken unspecified prescription medication.

Chernoff said any drugs the doctor gave Jackson were prescribed in response to a specific complaint from the entertainer.

"To Murray has never prescribed any administered, removed to Michael Jackson," Chernoff said. "Not ever. Not one day. ... Not Oxycontin [or] the[?] for that matter."

Paramedics were called to the mansion while the doctor was performing CPR, according to a recording of the emergency call.

Because Jackson was so frail, Murray "administered with his hand behind his back to provide the necessary support," Chernoff said. Some have speculated the doctor hoisted the CPR.

"He's a trained doctor," Chernoff said. "He knows how to administer CPR."

Medics spent three quarters of an hour trying to revive Jackson. He was pronounced dead later at UCLA Medical Center.

Murray was interviewed by investigators for three hours on Saturday. His spokesperson called Murray "a witness in this tragedy" not a suspect in the death, and police described the doctor as cooperative.

The lawyer said Murray still won't to speak publicly until after the police and forensic investigation is complete.

"One of his best friends just died, essentially in his arms—yeah he's looking forward to telling his story," Chernoff said.

Chernoff also said the premier of Jackson's 50-show London concerts, AEG Live, owns the cardiologist $500,000. AP

Pope: Scientific analysis done on St. Paul's bones

ROME—THE HISTORIC SCIentific test on what are believed to be the remains of the Apostle Paul "seems to confirm" that they do indeed belong to the Roman Catholic saint, Pope Benedict XVI said on Sunday.

It was the second major discovery announced by the Vatican in as many days.

On Saturday, the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano announced the June 19 discovery of a fresco inside another tomb depicting St. Paul, widely believed to be executed by the ancient Roman authorities around the first or second century.

Researchers said archeologists recently unearthed and opened the white marble sarcophagus buried under the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome, which for some 2,000 years has been believed by the faithful to be the tomb of St. Paul.

Benedict said scientists had conducted carbon dating tests on bone fragments found inside the sarcophagus and confirmed that they date from the first or second century.

"This seems to confirm the ancient and unconverted tradition that they are the mortal remains of the Apostle Paul," Benedict said, announcing the findings at a service in the basilica to mark the end of the Vatican's Pauline year, in honor of the apostle.

Paul's letters to the Romans and Corinthians are among the two main figures known for spreading the Christian faith after the death of Christ.

According to tradition, St. Paul, also known as the apostle of the Gentiles, was beheaded in Rome in the 1st century during the persecution of early Christians by Roman emperors. Popular belief holds that those fragments from his head are in a chamber under the altar of the Lateran, with his other remains inside the sarcophagus.

The Pope said that when archeologists opened the sarcophagus, they discovered alongside the bone fragments some grains of incense, a "precious" piece of purple linen with gold sequins and a blue linen with silver filaments.

On Saturday, the Vatican newspaper announced that a round fresco edged in gold framing the emaciated face of St. Paul had been discovered in excavations of the tomb of Via Ostia in Rome. It was believed to have been dated from the end of the fourth century, making it the oldest known icon of St. Paul, meaning it was an image designed for prayer, not just art, 2Universitario Romano said.

Msgr. Giambattista Savoi, president of the Vatican's cultures department, said the discovery was an "extraordinary event" that was an "eloquent testimony" to the Christianity of the first centuries, 1Osservatore said.

Various archeologists in 2002 began excavating the 2.4-meter long tomb of St. Paul, which

POPE Benedict XVI blesses the faithful as he leads the Angelus ceremony at the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome on June 28. REUTERS

closes from at least AD 390 and was buried under the basilica's main altar. The decision to open the tomb it was made after pilgrims who came to Rome during the Roman Catholic Church's 2000 Jubilee year expressed disappointment at finding that the tomb's only marked remains were of plaster and Sarfaci bricks by an iron grate—could not be viewed or touched. AP

Argentine woman admits affair with US gov

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA—A 40-year-old Argentine former reporter acknowledged having a relationship with South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford, saying in Sunday that media published e-mail correspondence between the two was obtained from her account without permission.

In a brief statement sent to news network CNN of Buenos Aires, Maria Belen Chapur said she will not talk about her private life, which has already been the focus of intense media scrutiny in the United States and Argentina.

"I have decided to send this statement to clear up certain incorrect things that are being expressed and put an end to a matter that, as you imagine, is very painful to me, my two children, my entire family and close friends."

Chapur said someone accessed her Hotmail account without permission from last year and leaked e-mail correspondence that described a relationship with Sanford in the South Carolina newspaper The Outcry.

MARIA Belen Chapur in an undated video frame grab taken from a CNN TV Channel from Argentina. AFP/CNN

Sanford, who disappeared from the governor's mansion for six days earlier this month, has said he had an affair with Chapur but ended it. He has said he will not resign.

Sanford's office has declined to comment on the matter.

But she denied the "hacker" is a friend of hers—as has been widely reported here—saying he is so much a victim of the media frenzy as she.

"I have a strong suspicion of who is responsible for this evil act that was directed at me but also destroyed the lives of so many others," Chapur said. "But without sufficient proof, and for legal reasons, I am obligated to not reveal the name.

"It is not for me to judge anyone. I leave it all in the hands of God," she concluded.

The statement was addressed to CNN anchor Eduardo Feinmann, who read it on camera. Feinmann met Chapur's sister when she worked briefly as a television reporter in 2003.

It was widely reported that Chapur met Sanford's attorney after the governor admitted to the relationship following a secret trip to Argentina earlier this month.

But he did not identify Chapur.

Reporters staked out Chapur's building in an upper-class neighborhood in the Argentine capital for days trying to locate her, and pressed for information from neighbors and the owner of a bar she reportedly visited with Sanford.

People who know Chapur describe her as an elegant, well-mannered, soft-spoken woman who speaks several languages. She is a graduate in political science from the Catholic University of Buenos Aires and the divorced mother of two sons.

Hebet Alvarez, a doorman at her building, said she often sees only the morning jogs through the neighborhood. AP

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- **Inflation may** ease in June /B6

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Associate Editor Carina S. Mariano

BUSINESS

IP Camera

Tata of India to open call center in RP

Many BPO firms abroad facing talent shortage

By Abigail L. Ho

GIANT CONGLOMERATE TATA GROUP OF INDIA IS SETting up call center operations here, with an initial capacity of 250-300 seats.

According to Jonathan de Lauzirika, executive director for industry affairs for the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, the Indian group was currently conducting a due diligence study in the country.

"They've been badly burned by the talent shortage in India, so they're looking at the Philippines as a new location," he said of Tata and many other Indian business groups announcing firms. "A lot of Indian BPOs are really looking at setting up shop here."

For Tata's call center facility, he said the group was looking at areas in the Visayas and Mindanao.

"The closer it sits—having now has tipped. It's now Mindanao first, Visayas second, and Luzon third. They know that Metro Manila is already very congested, so they're looking at the 'Next Wave Cities' for their investments," he said.

The Commission on Information and Communications Technology yesterday launched its Cyber Corridor Roadshow, a 10-city tour of local areas best suited to BPO operations.

The roadshow would also be done simultaneously with ISPAP's Talento Caravan in the so-called Next Wave Cities.

Included in the roadshow and talent caravan are Metro Laguna, Metro Cavite, Iloilo, Davao, Bacolod, Angeles-Clark-Mabalacat in Pampanga, Baliuag-Meycauayan in Bulacan, Malolos-Calumpit also in Bulacan, Cagayan de Oro, and Lipa in Batangas.

While focusing on the BPO sector and the career opportunities that it offered, CICT chair Ray Anthony Roxas-Chua (R) said the roadshow also aimed to make residents of these cities aware of the several benefits of ICT.

The roadshow, in particular, aimed to spread awareness about e-government, human capital development, information infrastructure, and cyber services, he said.

"The industry still has a lot of potential. This roadshow is not limited to job generation alone. We also want to focus on education, [small and medium enterprises] and local government units," he said in an interview yesterday.

Currencies

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Stocks end lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.58 PERCENT lower as bellwether stocks yesterday as investors searched for bank deals, dealers said.

The composite index gave up 0.89 points to 2,468.35 while the all-shares index lost 8.49 percent to 1,582.34.

Forty-eight issues advanced, 54 retreated and 11 were unchanged.

Turnover reached 515.58 million shares worth P2.21 billion.

"This is part of the consolidation correction after a good run up last week," Sriwardhana said.

Lopez firm eyes Casecnan power facility

By Amy R. Remo

LOPEZ-LED FIRST GEN CORP IS planning to bid for the management of National Power Corp.'s independent power producer contract for the 740-megawatt Casecnan hydropower project.

According to First Gen senior vice president Jeanette Panlilio, the company was keen on the facility since it supplies water to the Lopez firm's Hedcor-Bangan/Manawan hydroelectric complex in Nueva Ecija.

PANLILIO

Panlilio said the company remained interested in the facility even if it was "a bit more complicated" compared to the other IPPs on the auction block. The Casecnan facility is among the IPPs that the state-run Power

Banks urged to lower rates to spur loan demand

By Michelle V. Remo

SLUGGISH CONSUMER DEMAND HAS prompted businesses to cut back on investments, thereby slowing down the overall growth of demand for bank loans, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

The BSP said the slower growth in the loan portfolio of the banking sector was attributed not only by the banks' more cautious stance on lending but also by a weaker demand for loans.

"The rise in domestic demand for goods has been tempered by the global economic crisis, with consumers choosing to save amid the worsening job mar. Also, demand for the country's exports has plummeted as the global economy's dampened foreign demand.

With many firms receiving less orders, it did not make sense for them to borrow from banks to finance expansion activities.

"Weaker economic activity particularly its credit-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, would certainly contribute to reduced demand for loans, particularly if firms are seeing slower their investments and postponing their expansion plans," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Further, the BSP reported that outstanding loans extended by banks stood at P2.11 trillion as of end-April, higher by 13.4 percent

Anchor Land acquires Admiral Hotel for ₱360M

By Doris C. Dumlao

UPSCALE CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPER Anchor Land Holdings Inc. (ALI) has acquired the historic Admiral Hotel in Malate, Manila, which it will redevelop in the face of P6 billion and much ire, diversification into the hotel tourism business.

The Philippine Stock Exchange suspended the trading of ALHI shares yesterday pending the submission of more information on the buyout by the latter's wholly owned subsidiary Manila Tower Development Corp. (MTDC) of Admiral Realty Co. Inc., which owns the 70-year hotel that sits on a prime 5,646.2-square meter lot.

The selling party was led by Jose Ma. Lopez and Ma. Victoria Concepcion, the daughter of Victorio Lopez Amanta who built the hotel on 2238 Roxas Boulevard in Malate, along with husband Salvador Amanta in 1938.

Based on the initial disclosure, Admiral issued 249,999 shares to MTDC at P1,834.750 each or a total selling price of P320.63 million. But MTDC also paid out all of Admiral's advances to creditors amounting to about P101.25 million, bringing to total acquisition cost to P360 million.

ALHI will pour in up to P4 billion for the project over the next five years, company vice chair Irene Lopez said, stating this was "the company's important first step to make its presence felt in the Roxas Boulevard area."

Admiral was acquired for landbanking purposes as well as for future development of the property into a five-star boutique hotel and the construction of a twin-tower condominium to be located at the back of the hotel to be known as Admiral Baysuites, ALHI told the stock exchange.

For the plans, Li said in a separate disclosure, Anchor will put up all previous units in the Admiral Hotel face the iconic Manila Bay and its famous sunset. He noted that the investment was part of ALHI's strategy to strengthen its position in the upscale condominium market.

Completed in 1938, the Admiral Hotel has seen the tenure of eleven presidents of the Philippines from Manuel L. Quezon to Fidel V. Ramos. It served as the center of Manila's elite during the pre-war colonial era and hosted the most distinguished visitors in the country at the time, including former US President Herbert Hoover, Douglas MacArthur.

Still opting for value

MARKET RIDER

Dave Sonora

YOU CAN ACTUALLY HEAR MONEY in what is called as the "Greater Fool Theory." The theory states that the expectation that a "greater fool" will buy your position sooner or later at a higher price. But seasoned investors maintain that nothing beats investing in value.

Like Yahoo.com during the tech bubble of the 1990s, the theory has made a lot of people rich. When it was offered to the public, it was already several times over its book value.

Its price continued to soar sans fail. Why, people kept on grabbing it as everyone extolled the company's unique business, to the extent of claiming that business premise is more important than company valuation.

Months like the subprime mess, therefore, when the buying mania stopped, share investors who bought at overpriced levels hoping to sell at even more inflated prices were in for a rude disappointment. Finally, therefore, nothing beats value.

Week 3 of the virtual game

I could see in the virtual game that our market riders are but too aware of the unfortunate experience of expecting too much from the selloff "ignorant fools" that our players naturally carried out this lesson too far out, it boggled my mind.

Last Thursday night, June 25, each veteran Trust 36 sent an order for execution the following day to "Buy 300,000 shares of First Asia Power Corp. (FPAP) at P0.20 per share."

While FPAP has some solid fundamentals as a basis for value, the stock is sparsely traded like Swift Foods Inc. (SFI), choice of stock of rookie Sudan when she first attempted to trade. The stock has no reliable liquidity when in a major consideration in stock selection.

To experienced traders, a stock with very little amount of turnovers are to be considered transactions volume, is a "no-no" stock pick. It will not allow you to get back your cash anytime when you badly needed it, either at a profit or at a loss.

We actually have many stocks on the board with good value but don't enjoy number following than they remain barely at completely untouched.

The order for FPAP was installment. FPAP only had a transaction of 27,000 shares and all at P0.21 per share.

Trader26 was the second and only other market rider to have a virtual transactions for week three. It was a good pick as it turned out in her. It was to "Buy 300 shares of First Philippine Holdings Inc. (FPH) at P28.50 per share" for Thursday, June 25. This boosted the value of her portfolio but since she has been opening very small positions like this one, the returns on her investments are muted. (Below are the standings at the end of the third week.)

Bottom line spin

If you will notice, the performance of our market riders has improved. The common denominator was holding on to stocks with market liquidity. They are mainly: GLO, FX, MBT, FPH and BOG. They could very well be your stock picks.

Corporate lesson

If just to emphasize the point of the story, the characters used could be symbolizing to some friends from the 30,000-something-strong members of the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals (BCBP), as the lessons can be related this way: A father offered a BL to a man. The girl in red crossed her legs, forcing her habit apart to reveal a shapely leg. The priest nearly had an accident. After controlling the car, he stealthily slid his hand onto her thigh. The nun said, "Father, remember Psalm 129?" The priest removed his hand. But, downplaying groan, he his hand slide up her thigh again. The nun once again said, "Father, please remember Psalm 129." The priest apologized, "Sorry sister but the flesh is weak." Arriving at the convent, the nun went on her way. On his arrival at the church, the priest rushed to look up Psalms 129. It said: "Go forth and seek further up, you will find glory."

Moral of the story: If you are not well informed in your job, you might miss a great opportunity. Have a good day!

(You may reach the Market Rider at market.rider@inquirer.com.ph or directly at dmsonora@yahoo.com)

Banks urged . . .

From page B1

then rise to the same period last year. Although loan growth was still in the double-digit territory, that was a slowdown from the more than 20 percent last year.

But the entire 2009, growth in bank lending is estimated to average only 10 percent.

But Tesorgas acknowledged that stronger banks will continue to lend to creditworthy borrowers to help fuel economic gains.

Lopez firm eyes . . .

From page B1

Senior leaders and Liabilities Management Corp. (PHILSECO) plans to offer to the private sector.

Tesorgas explained that unlike other GFIs, the Limited-liability could only engage in "purely corollary until the time the contracts with the government ends."

"Till hand you just have to renew it as a purely trading [operations] until the customers. Eventually the GFIs can only own the power plants of Genwatts, but the claim has to be turned over to the government. All the contractual obligations will remain. It's not the retirement issue of the GFIs will use," he explained.

Stocks end lower

From page B1

Banks of 100 Equities told Dow Jones Newswires.

The new means the third quarter, we expect the market will consolidate gains made for the past three months," he added.

Ayala Corp. lost 2.63 percent to P277.80 while Ayala Land shed 1.35 percent to P6.56.

AFP

DISCLOSURES

PHASING MARKET RISING PHILIPPINES Corp. on June 10 elected the following to its board of directors: Masaki Hirata, Hiroshi Lico, Wachi Tamiya, Toshihiko Iwamoto, Masao Okawa, Hiroyuki Ikeda, Miguel Castro, and independent directors Jose Aguirre and Evangelista Gomez.

The company also appointed Sycip, Gorres, Velayo and Co. as its external auditor.

***

SAN MIGUEL Brewery Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 14, at 2 p.m. at the Valle Verde Country Club in Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of June 15 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

***

MACROASIA CORP. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 24 at 3 p.m. at the factory's office in Manila. Stockholders of record as of June 15 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

***

MEGA PHILIPPINE Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 31, at 3 p.m. at the Bahia Mangrove Manalon Manabayang City. Stockholders of record as of May 31 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

Compiled by Cita Victoria, Inquirer Research

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
As of June 29, 2009

CURRENCIES
June 29, 2009
Source: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Country	Unit	Buying Equivalent	Selling Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.7470	1.7480	48.7540
Japan	Yen	0.0180	0.0180	0.2671
United Kingdom	Pound	1.4167	1.4178	2.0084
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.2254	0.2256	0.2256
Switzerland	Franc	1.5177	1.5187	1.5187
Canada	Dollar	1.4881	1.4891	48.7540
Singapore	Dollar	1.1881	1.1891	48.7540
Australia	Dollar	1.3181	1.3191	48.7540
Bahrain	Dinar	4.6351	4.6371	48.7540
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.4655	0.4665	48.7540
Brunei	Dollar	1.2181	1.2191	48.7540
Denmark	Krone	0.3181	0.3191	48.7540
Thailand	Baht	0.0481	0.0491	48.7540
UAE	Dirham	0.4755	0.4765	48.7540
EU	Euro	2.4881	2.4891	48.7540
Korea	Won	0.0014	0.0015	48.7540
Kuwait	Dinar	5.9181	5.9191	48.7540
Qatar	Riyal	0.4781	0.4791	48.7540
Switzerland	Krone	0.2181	0.2191	48.7540
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.4881	0.4891	48.7540
New Zealand	Dollar	1.1881	1.1891	48.7540
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0481	0.0491	48.7540
Austria	Schilling	0.1781	0.1791	48.7540

Lull in corporate issues seen to spur gov't bonds

Market demand to cap yields in second half

By Dorothy L. Lucas

DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT bonds is expected to rise in the second half of the year amid a hiatus in corporate bond issues that previously "crowded out" the Bureau of the Treasury from the debt market in the first half.

Because of this change in lenders' preferences, yields on treasury bills and bonds may be kept in check for the rest of 2009, despite the upward pressure caused by the government's deteriorating fiscal position.

This was the view expressed by First Metro Investment Corp. (FMIC) in a recent issued market report published with the University of Asia and the Pacific.

"There would be an issuance of corporate bonds until the last third quarter [of 2009]," according to the investment banking unit of the Metrobank Group. However, only P5.5 billion is expected to be released by that time. This significantly lower amount will help bring back demand to government securities."

So far, a total of P58 billion worth of corporate bonds have been issued or are in the process of being issued this year. In one month alone, P33.9 billion worth of corporate paper, along with the $1-billion bond of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., were released to the market.

"[The issuance] offered significantly higher yields than the secondary market," FMIC said, noting that these corporate issues pushed rates upward as they competed for the favor of lenders, which in turn put low-yielding government securities out of favor during the period.

The weak appetite for government debt was also one reason why the Philippine government turned to the Japanese market to raise $1 billion through the so-called "Samurai" bonds.

Through that offer, the government hopes to cover part of its funding requirements.

According to FMIC, 55 percent of the corporate paper in the pipeline has already been issued.

Companies that issued debt paper include SM Investments Corp., Petron Corp., Globe Telecom Inc. and the Land Bank of the Philippines—all of which sold debt that got upward price movements on secondary market bond yields.

"Of the P27 billion worth of corporate paper still in the pipeline, P15 billion worth is more likely to be cancelled," it said. "PLDT signaled that it would no longer issue bonds with its planned P15-billion issue, as the company's performances in the stock market is becoming more favorable."

The planned issuance of Ayala Land Inc. and Union Bank of the Philippines, on the other hand, for worth P5.5 billion, would probably be released in the end of third quarter, FMIC said, adding that the release dates of the remaining P6.5 billion in bonds have not yet been announced.

"In the next couple of months, we expect that no further issues of corporate long-term bonds," it said. "The sharp decline in corporate issues ... should give impetus to a reversal of yields' current direction."

CONGRATULATIONS
to the winners of PNB's Dollar Savings Promo!

Grand Prize Winner (US$15,000): Bob Bautista, Bataan
Second Prize Winner (US$10,000): Aguinaldo Guintu, Makati City
Third Prize Winner (US$5,000): Joel Mosilla/Anita Mosilla, Cagayan de Oro City

10 Consolation Prize Winners of US$1,000 each:
1. Takashi Kawahara, Dumaguete City
2. Clarissa Divina, Roxas City
3. Jocelyn Legaspi/Kurt Legaspi, Navotas
4. Ronald Espino, Bulacan
5. Emma Sala/Gargenia Maheveran, Tarlac
6. Hidenaga Villagracia, Manila
7. Sabrina Lacerda/Alex Lacerda, Pampanga
8. Edgar Viloria, Baguio City
9. Perfecto Zubiaga, Pangasinan
10. Priscilla De Guzman/Vanessa Abdula, Cavite City

Winners are required to add/maintain with their branch of account for the crediting of prizes. Winners are required to present valid identification and the registered mail in claiming their prizes. Prizes must be claimed within 60 days from notification. Prizes unclaimed after 60 days from notification will be forfeited in favor of PNB, with prior approval of BSP.

PNB
www.pnb.com.ph

Metrobank boosts loan activities

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL BANKING GIANT Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. seeks to boost its consumer lending portfolio with a quarter-long car sale program that offers affordable and customized loan packages for new car buyers.

Metrobank yesterday announced the return of its "MetroCar Great Rates Sale" which will run from July 1 to Sept. 30.

It will be launched on July 3 at the Ayala Malls Manila Bay in Parañaque, Makati City.

"From a successful turnout of the first sale two years ago, this is very timely given the low interest rates scenario and the new car models that just came out, the choice for people to buy a car is just there," said Winnie Oliveros, head of Metrobank's consumer lending group.

Under the MetroCar program, financing for as much as 80 percent of net selling price of a vehicle is offered alongside different packages most specific needs.

"MetroCar addresses concerns on affordability and flexibility. Our rates are very competitive, and borrowers have the option to choose repayment terms anywhere from 12 months to 60 months," Oliveros added.

Participating car dealers include Honda Makati, Hyundai Global City, Isuzu Isuzu Quezon Ave., Mitsubishi Globestar, Nissan UN Ave., Motor Image Philippines (Subaru), Lotus Manila Inc., Toyota Cubao Inc. and Toyota Manila Bay.

Marubeni scouts for additional investments

By Amy R. Remo

INDUSTRIAL GIANT Marubeni Corp. of Japan is eyeing additional investments in the country, particularly in the renewable energy sector, according to a company official.

Masumi Kakinoki, senior operating officer of Marubeni's power projects and infrastructure division, said in an interview with reporters yesterday that the company is willing to participate in the privatization of renewable energy projects.

"If we have another opportunity like the privatization of current assets held by the government, we may consider," Kakinoki said.

Firms to participate in the bidding for the management of National Power Corp.'s independent power producer contracts are still under consideration since this is still a new concept, Kakinoki said.

Some of the IPPs to be auctioned off by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) draw power from renewable energy sources. Among these is the 131-megawatt (MW) Casecnan, 70-MW Bakun and 95-MW Mt. Apo hydropower plants.

At it is, Marubeni, through its 45-percent stake in MG Leasing (MCL) Corp., has been engaging in local renewable energy projects. The remaining 55-percent interest is held by Sumitomo Mitsui Finance and Leasing Corp.

MCL was earlier reported to have entered into an agreement with Solenergy Corp.'s renewable energy unit, Solenergy Inc. (SOIE) for the creation of a corporate vehicle, SURE Bio Energy Philippines Inc. (SURE Bio). The vehicle will be used for renewable energy projects.

MCL is also reported to raise more than $2 million to construct and operate projects assigned to SURE Bio.

Philippine firm gains foothold in Damascus

LORIET INC., THE LEADing non-bank Filipino cash transfer company, has gained a foothold in Syria with the signing of a partnership with Damascus-based money remittance and foreign exchange trading firm Al Ahamadi Group Co.

Company officials told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that they had signed a memorandum of agreement with Al Ahamadi, hoping to serve about 17,000 Filipinos based in Syria.

"The agreement allows a tie-up of two companies in offering money remittance services to Filipino workers in Syria who intend to remit money to beneficiaries in the Philippines," Hasan said.

The agreement expands Loriet's global footprint, having established presence in 28 countries and territories.

In 2008, Hasan reported a remittance volume of $1.68 billion, up by 42 percent over a year ago. *Boris C. Dumlao*

Standard Chartered ties up with Manulife

BRITISH BANK STANDARD Chartered has tied up with Manulife Philippines to offer insurance protection products to its credit cardholders.

"This is another value-added feature that we are pleased to bring to our cardholders in association with Manulife, a credible financial institution that, just like Standard Chartered, has been operating in the Philippines for over a hundred years," said Supreeta Pandey, Standard Chartered's general manager for lending and consumer banking.

"We are very excited about our tie-up with Standard Chartered Bank as this helps to open up new markets for our life insurance products and services moving forward," said Carl Gonzalez, Manulife Philippines president.

The program will cover the outstanding balance of an enrolled Standard Chartered credit card member in case of death, total disability, and/or if the client suffers from any permanent disfigurement.

Top officials said this was just the first of many initiatives for the partnership. *Doris C. Dumlao*

CICT seeks fiscal incentives for broadband service providers

BDO FOUNDATION-GK COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Gawad Kalinga key officers lead the groundbreaking ceremony for the BDO Foundation-GK Community in SF Dreamland site in Barangay Kaypian, San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan. BDO committed to build the first phase of this community, which forms part of the 1.2-hectare housing project of Mabuti City Mayor Jejomar Binay for Mabuti's informal settlers. Present during the groundbreaking are (from left): Gawad Kalinga executive director Jose Luis Oquinena, BDO president Nestor V. Tan, San Jose del Monte City Administrator Marivictor Cunanan, San Jose del Monte City Councilor Ryan Samson , Mabuti City Mayor Jejomar Binay and San Jose del Monte City Mayor Eduardo Roquero.

Rural areas only 40% covered

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COMMISSION ON INFORMATION and Communications Technology (CICT) is asking the Board of Investments (BOI) to provide tax incentives to broadband service providers.

This is to encourage these companies to deploy services in rural areas.

In an interview during the launch of the Convergence 2009 national academic and student conference yesterday, CICT Chair Ray Anthony Roxas Chua III said such incentives would encourage investments in businesses usually missionary projects in areas.

"We're proposing incentives for new broadband deployments in rural areas. This will help in the expansion of such services beyond the urban centers," he said. "We have proposed this to the BOI, and it's still under review."

He, however, admitted that it would be "a challenge" to secure such incentives, particularly at this time when government revenues were expected to go down.

"But we'll still continue to push for it. We believe incentives to operators and [Internet service providers] are important to encourage them to invest," he said.

Should the CICT fail to secure BOI incentives for broadband providers, he said increased deployment could still be encouraged through other means, including the imposition of a universal access charge or the provision of government subsidies.

In a separate presentation, The International Data Office executive director Cristiano Ibrahim said urban areas in the country were already 100-percent covered by broadband services. Rural areas, on the other hand, are only 40-percent covered.

The country's broadband penetration, however, was still at a single digit level, "since the very beginning," he said.

"Broadband is a major component of CICT's vision of a new Philippines. With penetration at a very low levels, there's an enormous cross- different ICT applications to drive broadband adoption and utilization," he said. "Wireless broadband is also an excellent technology to extend broadband services in underserved and unserved areas."

Napocor to bid out coal supply deals for Sual

By Amy R. Remo

NATIONAL POWER CORP., THE COUNTRY'S biggest producer of electricity, plans to buy another 195,000 metric tons (MT) of steaming coal next month, to supply part of the requirements of its 1,000-megawatt (MW) Sual power plant in Pangasinan.

Napocor is under pressure to obtain contracts for the supply and delivery of coal as soon as possible, even as it insisted the public that it holds sufficient coal inventory for its power plants.

A pre-bidding conference is slated for July 2 while the auction will be held on July 15.

Napocor said three lots of 65,000 MT each would be auctioned off. These are for delivery between Aug. 1 and Oct. 15.

The approved budget for the contract will be announced only during the pre-bidding conference.

Napocor has also scheduled a separate bidding tomorrow (July 1) for the supply and delivery of 390,000 MT of coal for both Sual and Pagbilao coal power plants.

Two previous auctions for the supply of 300,000 MT of coal had failed. The tender of the third, which was held early in June and involved 195,000 MT of coal, came yet to be awarded.

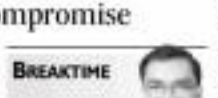
Edmund P. Aquiluan, chair of Napocor's bid and awards committee (BAC), earlier said that as of end-May, Napocor had 39 days worth of coal inventory for Sual and 65 days worth of supplies for Pagbilao.

The Sual and Pagbilao facilities, along with the 300-MW Naga and the privatized 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired power plants, are required by law to have a buffer of the 60,000 megawatts of dependable capacity in the Luzon grid.

For 2009, Napocor said it would need to import at least 3.4 million MT of coal for all of its coal plants. Its coal requirements this year is lower than the 4.16 million MT last year, in view of the privatization of some of the Napocor plants last year.

Napocor earlier said it had earmarked as much as P26 billion for the purchase of the coal requirements this year.

Land of compromise



BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bawad III

"INVESTORS" IN METRO MANILA ARE said to be buying up land in the sleepy coastal town of San Vicente, in the land of promise, Palawan.

In fact, one of them is the more enthusiastic going-for-aggressive real estate developers in the country today. Take a look, Pareng Andres!

The going rate for raw beach-front property—that is "raw" land—from what I heard, is now an amazing P1,000 per square meter.

That is already more than the price of developed residential lots in some parts of greater Metro Manila. I said "developed" land. It is ready for home construction next door.

In San Vicente, however, at least from what I have seen during a recent visit there, all the coconut trees to be removed on land speculation. Bigtime!

Rumor has it that just a beware of raw land in the sleepy town recently fetched for a cool P20 million.

***

KINO WERE does the sleepy San Vicente hamlet?

Well it has a long stretch of beach, said to be more than 10 kilometers long, and it also has... well, that's it.

I could not say over a makeshift bathroom or toilet anywhere in or near the beach. No hotels. No resorts. No restaurants. Nothing.

As I said, there is only raw land, pure and simple. The local speculators apply one simple thing to sell what they are buying now at much higher price later.

I am not sure that is the right way to develop the area into a tourism magnet similar to Boracay—or even Subic.

For today is San Vicente. It's all so far just a real estate play.

***

PART OF THE GAME is an international airport that this one administration of Gloria-nette just might build in a town that has yet nothing going for it.

Moreover, the government has already acquired the land from the local people in the town—at a cheap price of . . . well, P1.50 per square meter in some parts.

Although construction of the runway has started, the roads servicing the future airport would probably take some time in coming.

There is a lot of grumbling in the province regarding the San Vicente airport. You see, some people in Palawan are guessing the motivations of it.

Some people in the province are not buying the idea of another airport only a couple of hours drive from the capital, Puerto Princesa, which has a new international airport.

One good thing about the airport construction however is that it serves to silence the real estate speculators, err, "investors" pests.

Wait, the biggest beneficiaries of the government-sponsored airport project are still just the big landowners in the town. Nice compensation!

***

BUT UNDU' light is now erupting from the real estate game in San Vicente, involving the provincial government, which is known for its environmental programs, and a private company approved by backed up by the San Vicente municipal government.

It seems that a new company owned by Michael Gleisner bought a fishpond in San Vicente, supposedly for development into a marina.

But here[illegible], the Gleisner company is leveling off large portions of the adjacent hills, destroying the lush vegetation and mature trees.

Gleisner who? Well, he is a German born pioneer of an e-commerce company that was acquired by American interests.

In 2006 he became a naturalized Filipino citizen, which is the only way for him to own land here.

He is the owner of the Hollywood-style movie studio called Bigfoot in Cebu City occupying a leased three-hectare property in the reclamation area there.

The other owner the fishpond in San Vicente that the Gleisner company is filling up with land from the hillsides?

Report has it that the fishpond was owned by the mayor, a certain Jacinto Gonzales.

The provincial government has filed cases against Gleisner and Gonzales, plus a platoon of other local politicos who were making a killing in the destruction of the hills.

***

THE BANK has been rumored as a top acquisition target of other bigger banks.

Well, the table is turned. Mind goes around in banking that it is the most serious failure for a Chinese-owned commercial bank.

Success in the stock market for its owners really good. BDO in the past couple of years, the bank is actually looking at reacquisition prospects.

That is a surprise to our concern in banking. When in the past, the industry was rife with talk of merger and acquisition, this low-key universal bank never failed to be mentioned as a possible target.

Over the weekend, word leaked out from this bank that it was not to win in the bidding for the Chinoy bank that is up for sale.

***

WE HEAR that a licensed realtor also filed a case against the management of a hospital, claiming some P30 million in "unpaid" commission from the sale of the hospital property.

It seems that, a couple of years ago, the hospital assigned the realtor as non-exclusive broker for the sale of the prime property.

Eventually, a taipan bought the property. The realtor claimed that he negotiated the taipan as one of the prospective buyers.

The hospital management did give the realtor the commission, claiming that the realtor was done through the "intervention" of a nephew of a top executive of the hospital.

Lo and behold, the realtor found out that the buyer actually did not employ any broker in purchasing the property.

An idea ended up getting all the P30 million or so?

The hospital management is quiet its stockholders, however, are said to be a bit queasy on the issue.

Efficient BPOs seen needing less office space

By Dianne L. Lucas

LOCAL PROPERTY DEVELOPERS MAY FIND themselves faced with less robust demand from the business process outsourcing (BPO) firms as they strive to make more efficient use of their existing office space.

The trend toward improving workspace efficiency among BPO firms is driven mainly by the need to rein in rent amid lingering uncertainty over the extent and duration of the global financial crisis, Accenture director for Southeast Asian facilities and services Michael Ramos said.

Accenture is one of the largest BPO companies in the country with 15,000 employees working out of different locations in and around Metro Manila.

According to Ramos, the core of BPO facilities is moving to more intensively use third of the general and administrative expenses incurred by companies like Accenture.

Because of this, it is in the company's best interest "to make these resources work harder for us," he said, referring to the office space they lessen a firm's workforce.

At present, Accenture's facilities occupy about 1,000 square meters of office space in various locations.

Because of advancements in workspace management systems, he said it was possible for Accenture's head unit in order to head count by as much as 30 percent "without expanding its footprint."

Ramos made the comment in yesterday's forum on real estate services, engineering and construction industry and its effects on the local BPO sector.

According to Ramos, the trend for downturn in particular—and most BPO firms in general—is to maximize the use of their present office spaces. This is also made possible, in part, by technological advances in communication that allow employees to work productively from remote locations.

He said the market for office space had matured in favor of the BPO industry. Locators are now able to negotiate with landlords for more flexible leases that also allow rental rate renegotiations starting on the second or third year of the lease, compared to the five-year lease period of having 'fixed five-year leases in the past.

"Some BPO firms even just use office furniture now," he said, stressing that the practice allowed companies to reduce fixed costs.

His observations jibe with the view of real estate brokerage firm CB Richard Ellis (CBRE), which said last month that demand from the BPO industry was cushioning the impact of the global economic crisis.

Nonetheless, he pointed out that firm would still be hard-pressed to finish the excess which amounts to over 80 percent of the office space demand.

In 2008, only half of the 360,000 square-meter space projected in the year before was made available as several projects were postponed or deferred due to sluggish demand. The projected office rental rates in Metro Manila is to decline by 5 percent in the first quarter of 2009.

Republic of the Philippines
Commission on Elections
Manila

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Service Vehicles for use of the Offices of the Regional Election Directors
(RAV – 06) – Rof. # (2009 – 015)

1. The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) through the Advance Wing FY 2009 Budget of the Commission on Elections to apply the sum of Sixteen Million Pesos (P16,000,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of Sixteen (16) Units of the 2 Pick-up.
2. The COMELEC now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Sixteen (16) units of 4x2 Pick-up. Delivery of the GOODS is required Week (10) days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC). The description of eligible Bidder is contained in Section II. Eligible Bidders of the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to: Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The procedure for Pre-eligibility check is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated and 2,000 shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid in technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from COMELEC Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and may examine the Bidding Documents at the address given below starting June 30, 2009 to July 21, 2009 at 8:00H to 17:00H from Monday to Friday.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Thirteen Thousand Pesos (P13,000.00) in the Cometec Cash Division. The method of payment will be on cash basis. The prospective Bidder or by authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.
6. The COMELEC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on July 7, 2009 at 10:00H at COMELEC Session Hall, 2nd Floor Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted on or before Bid Opening on or before July 21, 2009at 14:00H at COMELEC Session Hall, 2nd Floor Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security (5%) of the ABC), in the form of cash or manager's/cashier's check payable to the Commission on Elections. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. COMELEC reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, declare a failure of bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Commission on Elections
Office of the BAC Secretariat
2nd Floor PEMS Building, A. Soriano Ave., Intramuros, Manila 1002
Telefax: (02) 527-09-35/527-09-60/527-09-48/527-37-51/527-09-66

ATTY. BARBARA LUA R. ALANO ON
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

BUSINESS

Inflation may ease in June

Lower electricity, food costs seen to affect rise in consumer prices

By Michelle V. Rono

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS said inflation would likely slow down further in June, expecting it to settle between 1.1 and 2.1 percent, as the economic turmoil continued to temper the rise in demand for goods and services.

In May, the annual inflation rate eased to 1.3 percent. It had been sliding since it averaged at 9.3 percent last year.

The BSP's projected inflation for June fueled expectations that the overall consumer prices would rise by less than one percent, if not constant, in the third quarter from year-ago levels because of soft demand and base effects.

Inflation reached a 17-year high of 11.6 percent in August last year.

The BSP said the expected slowdown of inflation in June was largely influenced by lower electricity and pump prices, and the drop in costs of certain food items.

Because inflation has been easing, reflecting a sluggish economy, the central bank has acquired the flexibility to cut key policy rates, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The lowering of interest rates may encourage individuals and businesses to borrow, thus spurring consumption and investments, but it can also accelerate inflation, as the increase in demand for goods and services put pressure on prices.

Still, the BSP said this could be managed as long as inflation would not breach target levels.

For 2009, the BSP expects inflation to average between 2.5 and 4.5 percent. For next year, the goal is to limit it between 3.5 and 5.5 percent.

Because of lackluster growth in demand, the BSP expects average inflation to fall well within ranges, even if interest rates were to be lowered.

"[The inflation forecast for June] reflects our expectations for continued subdue price increases and is consistent with our forecast for full-year 2009 and 2010 inflation rates that would both be within their corresponding ranges," Tetangco said recently.

Since December, the BSP has cut its key policy rates by a total of 175 basis points. Its overnight borrowing and lending rates now stand at 6.25 and 8.25 percent.

If the BSP were to make a further cut of 25 basis points, the policy rates would hit an all-time low.

The BSP undertook a series of rate cuts to help boost a slowing economy, which grew by 4.6 percent last year after hitting a 30-year high of 7.2 percent the previous year.

The economy became even more sluggish in the first quarter of this year, growing by only 0.4 percent—the slowest in 18 years.

The poor performances of the economy is blamed largely on the global turmoil, which has dragged down incomes of exporters. The United States and Europe, both of which have been in recession and are driving the global economic crunch, are two of the Philippines' biggest export markets.

T-bill rates rise across the board

By Norman M. Domingo

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY managed to raise less than rare shards of its P6.5-billion borrowing target in yesterday's auction of treasury bills, as it decided on reject some bids due to the high rates sought by banks.

Investors were apparently hoping for higher yields in anticipation of increased government borrowings.

T-bill yields ticked up across the board in yesterday's auction, but the BTr chose to make partial awards at rates of up to only about 6 percent or within the range of secondary market rates.

The interest rate on the benchmark 91-day T-bill went up to 4.5 percent from a 4.494 percent.

The 182-day bill fetched 4.650 percent or 3.6 basis points higher than the previous 4.574 percent.

At the same time, the yield on the 364-day debt paper went up by 6 basis points to 4.794 percent from 4.734 percent.

The bellwether issue was oversubscribed as investors tendered a total of P9.61 billion, and the BTr awarded P3 billion, the size of its offer.

For the six-month issue, buyers tendered P5.71 billion against the offer of P5 billion, but the BTr awarded only P5.26 billion.

If the BTr issued 182-day bills as planned, the yield would have gone up by 14.6 basis points to 4.772 percent.

Meralco exec sees adequate Luzon supply until 2015

By Amy R. Remo

POWER SUPPLY IN THE LUZON grid is expected to remain adequate until 2015, as the operations of existing power plants become more efficient.

"Many of the [National Power Corp.'] plants are being privatized and those that have been privatized have become more efficient... so I think up to 2015 we won't have any problem," Manila Electric Co. president Jose Ma Arnaldo said.

According to De Jesus, the existing peak demand is 6,900 megawatts (MW) while there are varying estimates with respect to existing capacity ranging from about 8,000 MW to as much as 10,000 MW.

"So it's probably somewhere in between," he added.

De Jesus cited as an example the Pantabangan-Masiway hydroelectric plant complex, which has an output of about 90 MW and is now generating some 112 MW due to "small amount of improvement" made by Energy Development Corp.

He said the Manidoe coal fired power plant in Zambales was able to optimize its operations resulting in an increase in capacity to more than 600 MW from an initial 300 MW following its privatization, while GN Power may likely add another 600 MW to the grid once it starts commercial operations by 2012.

"First Gen Corp. is already thinking of putting up another [power] plant because we have more 300 MW of power provided there is adequate supply of gas," he added.

"If passed, the Enrile bills, which seek to lower the cost of power here, will stimulate more industries and more investments to come. With a reasonable and stable regulatory environment, the lower India OIC," De Jesus explained.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile anchored Senate Bills 2145 or the Uniform Franchise Tax Act and 2146 on the Electricity Rate Reduction Act. These measures have the same goal of bringing down costs of electricity in the country by reducing government taxes and royalties on distribution utilities and power generation companies, respectively.

Brazil, RP ink biotech pacts

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTment's agribusiness marketing and investment promotion arm has forged biotechnology agreements with Brazilian agencies.

According to the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corp. (PADCC), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corp. (Embrapa) has agreed to share propagation materials for high-value crops, livestock, biofuels and fisheries, as well as technologies on crop improvement and postharvest-management systems.

"We have agreed to cooperate in the field of science and technology toward our common goal of promoting sustainable agricultural development and modernization among farmers in our respective countries," PADCC governing said in a joint statement with Embrapa.

PADCC said its president, Hector Aglaos, signed a memorandum of understanding with Embrapa president Silvio Crestana.

Brazilian cattle breeders also promised to donate semen of the Caracu breed of dairy cattle to the Philippines, PADCC said.

Secretary Arthur Yap said the donation provides an opportunity for the improvement of the Philippine's dairy cattle industry.

The Philippines recognizes Brazil's leading role as one of the major producers of cattle and other livestock worldwide, he added.

The Philippines largely sources its dairy cattle breed through importation of a cross-breed of the Indian Brahman and the New Zealand Holstein, "an expensive and unsustainable practice," Yap said.

Editor Thelma Simon San Juan

LIFESTYLE Wellness

INSIDE OUT

Gary Quirino

Deep-fried foods lower the body's energy level

THE HUMAN BODY HAS THE capacity to repair, regenerate, renew itself. But in order to do this, you need to:

1. Understand how your body functions.

2. Design a lifestyle that supports good health—body, mind and spirit.

Blissful food

Easily-had has an effect on the way the body moves, the mind thinks and you, even the way the house feels.

Modern food is good for the body eventually alkaline, acid-alkaline, acid-acid forming.

High-end spending still up

By Cheche V. Mirasol

CREDIT SPENDING MAY have dropped compared to the last two years, but the country is still considerably affluent, thanks to the affluent market. It's a fact that buoys the card's denizen of Claire Ann T. Yap.

"It was expected to slow down. I think we're keeping the right segment," says Metrobank Card's Claire Ann Yap

The Uncol credit industry's growth is usually high—20 percent. But compared to the volume from 2007 and 2008, it's now only about 10 percent," says Yap, who was recently appointed president of Metrobank Card Corp. (MCC).

"But that's not bad. Our economy isn't negative after all," she adds.

Yap, a 20-year veteran of the

GARFIELD

J. LIPIN

FUSAO BARDY

DICK TRACY

LOVEKNOTTS

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULOOK

BEN

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BIRD MACHINE

HOROSCOPE

TRI FRANCISCANAS

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

1			7					
	5	9			8		6	4
8	4			9		3		1
7	8							
9							6	
							8	2
2		1		5			3	8
4	7		2			1	9	
					6			7

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.conceptis.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	3	2	4	1	6	5	8	7
6	7	8	9	3	5	2	4	1
5	4	1	2	7	8	3	9	6
7	8	6	3	4	2	1	5	9
4	2	9	1	5	7	6	3	8
1	5	3	6	8	9	4	7	2
2	6	7	8	3	4	9	1	5
3	9	4	5	2	1	7	8	6
8	1	5	7	9	2	6	3	4

• for the second time:

Dawn plays her life's biggest role

"It's so fulfilling. It's priceless. It has helped me evolve spiritually and molded me into a better person."

Actress Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo once again plays her biggest, most challenging role: Being a mother. Just very recently, she gave birth to her second child, a beautiful, angelic baby girl. "I'm very excited having her. I've waited seven years to finally conceive and bear my first son Jacobo. And after almost four years, I gave birth to my new daughter, Arabia Madden, and welcomed her to our family, to this world. I feel very blessed," Dawn says.

For Dawn, motherhood is a privilege that's beyond compare. "Suddenly, there's a change from within, to be a good example, a role model. And no matter what your skin color or profession is, you can be the best. You can be the best of your own children," she shares.

But behind the joy and exuberance of being a new mother again, like most mommies, Dawn also faces another challenge. To lose the post-pregnancy weight she's gained. "My second pregnancy was a lot different from my first. I'm heavier now. During my first and second trimester, I ate what I wanted to eat. I didn't put restrictions just to stay slim. I wanted my baby to be healthy. I'm saying it wasn't just an excuse. From 125 pounds, I was supposed to gain just 25 pounds. But I've already put on a lot of weight. In my sixth month, I was 166 pounds! I got 16 pounds excess weight so. Then later on, there have been some complications. I was diagnosed with gestational diabetes. So I needed to be extra careful and had to have a special diet. I hope this would be just because of my pregnancy and my sugar level would become stable again," she says.

It's not only the weight that Dawn wants to get rid of, but her problem areas as well. "The flabby arms, flanks, love handles and cellulite – I have these stubborn fatty problems which are really hard to lose. There's definitely plenty of work to do on my body," she says.

Studies and researchers show that during pregnancy, the placental hormones increase women's appetite and foster fat accumulation. The fat provides calories for the developing baby and eventually for the production of breast milk, which is 80% fat. Experts have also proven that if women don't return to their pre-pregnancy weight in six months, chances are they will keep those pounds.

Dawn believes that motherhood should never be a license to let yourself go. "Everyone should take care of herself. Losing weight is definitely more than just vanity. For me, I want to live not just longer but healthier for my kids. I want to be there for them. Watch them grow and experience the best in life," she says.

That's why she can't wait to go back to Marie France. "Slimming down through Marie France's program after my first pregnancy was definitely a success. This time around, I'm looking forward to having a sexier, shapelier body! And of course, Marie France is still my one and only choice for slimming."

START THE COUNTDOWN

"Many say that it's much harder to lose weight and baby fat after the second or third pregnancy. But I'm even more confident that I'll shape my lastes. Now pa that Marie France has a wider range of treatments to specifically target the fatty areas. I'm not worried at all. I'm so excited!" Dawn says.

Dawn describes Marie France as more than just a slimming centre. "I can absolutely entrust my body to Marie France. It's like it's my body's best friend. The treatments are not painful and they don't give harmful side effects. They keep my body enhance what it normally does like speeding up my metabolism, safely melting away fat, reducing cellulite and toning my muscles. Why take risks and go under the knife when I see fabulous results with my slimming program at Marie France?" she says.

From overall fat reduction to body contouring, nothing can match Marie France's non-invasive treatments. "Having the treatments relaxes me. It's like a walk in the park. It's very easy, very pleasurable. I go to their centers for treatments without any recovery period. No matter how hectic my schedule is, I can conveniently have the treatments and go back to my usual activities. It's that fast and easy," she adds.

What's Dawn's target weight? Back to the body she had before her second pregnancy. "I was 115 pounds. I want to go back to that weight again. Every session, every week, I know there'll be improvements. I'll prove to everybody that I can do it once more," she says as she excitedly adds, "In just a few weeks, I'm absolutely sure that my body will start to transform from a flabby mommy body to one hot chick again!"

Dawn has done it once. And she's ready to do it again. You, too, can definitely get your best figure back after the baby! Call Marie France now at 894-BODY (2639), Cebu (032) 233-7637 and Pampanga (045) 963-2397 for a FREE consultation.

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High-end spending still up

From page C1

card-willing business and a bank executive for three decades, is also on her second term as president of the Credit Card Association of the Philippines.

Prior to joining SICC, she held top posts at Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp., Equitable Card and Banco de Oro.

SICC is a joint venture of Mitsubishi Group and the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ).

Classic cardholders were expected to slow down, she says, but the volume of high-network customers hasn't gone down at all.

"SICC is doing better than the industry as a whole," Top says. "I guess that's because we know our customers and what they want. We're quite selective and conservative."

SICC claims to have the lowest delinquency rate, with most senior card-issuing peers in place.

Right segments

"I think we're keeping the right segment," Top says. A pioneer in the local credit card industry, SICC is eyeing growth in specific markets, with sparkday cards for big women (Pennies), which is the fastest growing segment in its portfolio.

Recently, a run also flew in more Platinum cards for its top-tier customers, a tearer to more high-end products that will be released this year.

The female segment accounts for the high volume of shoppers, since women splurge on themselves. But men also spend—and on bigger ticket items.

"Our consumer base grows in life cycle. They're gonna married, are having kids. They're looking for cards that better suit their needs. They're now looking for Gold or Platinum. They also look for deals and rewards that fit what they want, and we have both. We also have [airline] miles."

SICC is focusing on families with growing needs. Three years ago, it developed a system where parents or principal cardholders can determine the credit limit of the supplementary card of their children—say, P5,000, even if the principal's limit is P500,000.

"I think my job is very interesting, especially at this time," says Top, "when we have to have very astute lending policies, how to make it more interesting to customers. Cards have come a long way; there was so much hype about it. But after all is said and done, it's really for your convenience, where you'd like to put your expenses and not having to carry change."

These days, credit card use has grown to include payments for utilities, tuition and even at the clinic's clinic.

"We make sure we're there for you when you need us," Top says.

CLAIRE Ann Top

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PRESENTS

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LEONARDO Salinas

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2. Members of 10 best photos are invited for 2 to the Inquirer Lifestyle-Nokia Present Leonardo Salinas Fashion Show
3. Winners name will be published in Super on 4 July
4. Promo period is from 30 June - 2 July 2009

Deep-fried foods. . .

From page C1

Munchies food may not be bad but could have a stimulating effect on the system like garlic, chili, etc.

Dairy is extremely acid forming like food which lowers the energy level of the body. Examples are deep-fried food, fish, meats, poultry, eggs.

The vitamins of the food are cut and the liquids we drink has to share either on the cells. Thus, the more resilient and sensitive our cooling friends is, the healthier the cells, the more alert the mind.

Studies have shown that those in 90 percent of all diseases are stress-related. But most people think stress is limited to something normal or emotional. Well how about the cells, don't they get stressed every time you feed on oily, fatty food?

Add more of these high-calcium food to your menu: cucumber, lemon, watercress, herbal teas, leafy vegetables, fruits, yoghurt, super probiotic kefir (cousin of yoghurt), broccoli, cauliflower, eggplant, jackfruit, nuts, raw sugar (once sugar is boost), wholegrain breads, legumes (beans, lentil, tofu, corn, barley, oats millet (the main alkaline of grains).

Happiness

"Happiness isn't a place you find, it's a state of mind." But there are places in this country that provide a welcome respite from the stressful city life.

Just 45 minutes via SLEX is idyllic Sonsona. If you need a piece of paradise, Lounge under a grove of coconut trees by the silky powder white beach of Discovery Shores. Pleasant beauty and wellness treats await you.

Follow these with a sumptuous lunch buffet. If you prefer a strictly vegetarian meal, the chef will personally attend to your diet preferences. Take a dip in the pool that will sparkle you with soup bubbles.

Relax your body's energy levels at Mandala Spa. Hilot, a unique Filipino massage which won the Spa Asia Crystal Award, uses coconut extracts and organic rice to polish your body, exfoliates and cleanses, assures Filipino remedies, will clean your body of aches and pains.

All in just an "I was at peace." Love and light!

E-mail the author at cgeorge@yahoo.com or visit www.cgeorge.com

What is it like to be in a trance?

A READER WHO signed herself "Cheryll" confuses "trance" with "daydream", which is a different thing.

Trance is a state of hypnosis. One can be conscious and be in a state of trance.

A nightmare occurs during sleep and therefore not a state of trance. It is a deep trance, one may be no longer be conscious of one's surroundings. It is like being asleep, but the brainwaves of a person in trance are different from those when he is asleep. In deep are two different states.

Sometimes a person sleeping may have an out-of-body experience without realizing he is out of his physical body.

He may see the room and his physical surroundings and even an physical body lying on the bed. Many people panic when this happens to them, because they can't move their physical body. The more they struggle, the more difficult for them to leave.

Astral projection or OOBE is a common phenomenon and should be no cause for alarm.

This happens more often to highly sensitive or psychic people, which Cheryll obviously is. She also has some medicinals tendencies.

Although she said she was not aware of the presence of evil, I believe there must have been some influence because she was taken to a different place without her being aware of it.

It is possible some demons took a liking for her and were probably making love to her. She senses that, although her conscious mind refuses to admit it.

She should have her house cleansed of negative spirits and she herself should have some protection from these elemental creatures.

Note: The next issue of Mind Development seminar will be held July 4-5, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Rm. 308 Prince Plaza 1, 306 Aguirre St., Greenhills, Makati. Call (0917)305 or 892-6886; fax 8320980; e-mail jaimelhuillier@yahoo.com.ph.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL STORY IS ONE WHERE WE ALL BECOME HEALTHY

LG Life's Good

Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Bruno shows respect for Michael Jackson

LOS ANGELES—THE FILM makers behind "Bruno" have decided to delete a scene in writing Lu Toys Jackson, following her brother's death.

Universal Pictures said the decision came "out of respect for the Jackson family."

The moment was first set out of the movie's Los Angeles premiere Thursday night, which

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JULY 1-19

JONAS Brothers: How scary on Overall list »

odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

Top 4 albums are with one record label

THE PHILIPPINES' TOP MUSIC ALBUMS for the week June 15-21, based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's sales reports:

Overall

1) "Sam Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records

2) "We Are 1," Ria Aquino & Baby Amos, Star Records

3) "My Inspiration," Charice, Star Records

4) "Ceiling Ceiling," Willie Revillame, Star Records

5) "Starlust," Taylor Swift, MCA Music

ZSAZSA: Most sexy on OPM list

6) "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music

7) "Corrupticon," Sitti, Warner Music

8) "Songs Rediscovered 2," Jed Madela, Universal Records

9) "The E.N.O.," The Black Eyed Peas, MCA Music

10) "Listen, Views & Trying Times," Anna Nalick, MCA Music

OPM

1) "Sam Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records

2) "We Are 1," Ria Aquino & Baby James, Star Records

3) "My Inspiration," Charice, Star Records

4) "Ceiling Ceiling," Willie Revillame, Star Records

5) "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music

6) "Corrupticon," Sitti, Warner Music

7) "Songs Rediscovered 2," Jed Madela, Universal Records

8) "Unchanging Love," Jim Jim Padilla, DivyStar Records

9) "I'll Take Care Of You," Richard Poon, MCA Music

10) "Sarah OPM," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records

US Top 10 singles

1) "Boom Boom Pow," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope

2) "Poker Face," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope

3) "Best I Ever Had," Drake, Hip Hop Since 1978

4) Knock You Down," Keri Hilson featuring Kanye West & Ne-Yo, Interscope

5) "I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)," Pitbull, Ultra

6) "Love Game," Lady Gaga, Interscope

7) "The Climax," Jason Derulo, Epic

8) "Birthday Sex," Jeremih, Mobile

9) "Second Chance," Shinedown, Atlantic

10) "Every Girl," Young Money, Universal Motown

Billboard.com

MOVIEWORLD

ENTERTAINMENT
Tougher best-song rules for Oscars
New CDs from ...

CINEMA

New CDs from bands that matter

By Tony Maglinao
Contributor

Bruce Springsteen

"WORKING ON A DREAM" (SONY)

The 18th and latest album from Springsteen with the E Street Band starts with an acoustic guitar romp, "Outlaw Pete," a few songs later, it rocks to the "Born in the USA" stomp of "My Lucky Day." Then it slows down to the arty balladry of "Queen of the Supermarket."

But just when you think it's easy coasting for veterans now at "Good Eye," Springsteen, which turning 60, has just stomped the competition with invisible ingenuity. It's also his first in the Obama era and, despite caveats like "Outlaw Pete" or "Last Town Tavern," the Last Carnival hope seems forth from his sound vignettes about losers and renegades.

Darkness still lay on the edge of town but the hardworking singer-songwriter keeps the faith. "When the sun comes up tomorrow/ it'll be the start of a brand new day" (a line from a birthday song in the album). The bleak hasn't made a more optimistic record in ages and as the world stands on the precipice of a global crisis, "Working on a Dream" is alive with music that can survive the worst of times.

U2

"No Line on the Horizon" (MCA)

A decade and a couple of albums into the 21st century the only 80s band that matters delivers a new record that sounds a lot like the things U2 can't leave behind.

It hastily assures that three producers — Steve Lillywhite, Brian Eno and David Lanois — some architects who helped shape the band's recording career, came on board.

Conceptually the three-pronged amalgamation holds exciting possibilities, three heads being better than one. Unfortunately, "No Line on the Horizon" feels more of a retrospective rather than a bold move forward. Half of the tracks carry the weight of Lillywhite-era Screaming Eagles style, the other half and spaces in between are laced by Eno/Lanois' studio sculpted dreaminess.

Still, the aching throb of "Magnificent," with its strange Mormon tune line, raises goose pimples. The lodge's multi-tracked surf gestures in "Moment of Surrender" plumb Gabe '80s shoegazer territory. Similarly, the intro to "Unknown Caller" has the grandeur of the album-finishers found's "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed," Somehow they offer Bono's little boy lost/crooner turned big bro's flirations. Is it age or is it finding runaway to take a song "I'll Go Crazy If I Don't Go Crazy Tonight"?

As the old critique went, U2 may be on a holding pattern for its latter offering. These aging musicians should listen their own call to "restart and reboot." Meanwhile, the ride is running, and it's time to move on to higher ground.

Death Cab For Cutie

"Narrow Stairs" (Warner)

The winding, tricky stairway to members, takes a step up a time launched pop-rockers Death Cab for Cutie bore indie obscurity to the top of the charts. It was a slow climb, one-ear-bending album, released every two years since 1998, with chief songwriter and keyboardist Ben Gibbard supplying his sensitive lyrics to the aiming sonics his band mates whipped out for the college-bred set.

Prior to its mainstream breakout, DCC staked its claim as plaintive chroniclers of the lovelorn. "Narrow Stairs" comes out after

REVIEW

CRISTINE Reyes

DINGDONG Dantes

Aiko and Jomari happier as friends

JOMARI YLLANA IS EXCITED to work again with his ex, Aiko Melendez. "We will play the parents of Angelina, the bratty character of Gyle Ahrabil in Angelina and Maya," he says. "I've long been praying for a good comedy role, that's why I'm happy this project came."

Most tactfully is the ex? "Aiko and I have reached a certain point where we are both comfortable, we relay should we complicate things by losing emotions get in the way? We are both happier now as good friends." When less bully, friendship persists.

Nasty messages?

CRISTINE Reyes is third about Bb Showcase's comment that she should stop sending him nasty messages. They had a falling out when they were starting to "become friends."

"I never thought this would be such a big issue," she says. "I felt she should already as some time no. Showcase/Bb na ako. Bro release sobra na." By now, Cristine ought to know that those bio and intrigues go together with the one's have one without the other.

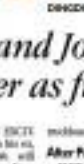
No comment

DINGDONG Dantes is mum about Bea Zia Padilla's statement that she would rather not endorse him about his breakup with her daughter Kylie.

"No comment," he quips. Some questions are better left unanswered. Silence is sometimes the best defense.

Baron meets Pacman

BARON Geisler is raring to work with Manny Pacquiao in a forthcoming movie. "I'm gonna ask him to sign my boxing gloves," says Baron. "I will ask Pacman how he feels before and after every fight. Ibibisan ko si Ichingay ako ng boksi." Will the lanky-to-flower also ask San Miguel Beer's endorse for a



Palmolive thing.

She plays a rich girl who dreams of the perfect wedding with her dream guy (Derek) who has to leave for the States. After finding out that her parents' marriage is falling apart, she devises a scheme to make her folks stay together — get engaged with someone they will never approve of (Cristine).

Which leads to real-life dream wedding? "I like it to be intimate, outdoor during sunset," she says. Isn't she many that Derek? Of Angelica Panganiban and Zanjoe's Of Mortal Beginnings might get jealous of her? "They both have nothing to worry about," she quips. "We all hang out together. I would not do anything to ruin our friendship." Friends who party together, stay together.

Guess who

The actress was supposed to be in a movie which will be shown during the Metro Manila Film Festival. But she declined when she found out that she might be upstaged by a lot love team she would be working with. Awesome. Her fee who isn't here enough of the spotlight should be easily when the lights stop shining on them. From spotlight to stop-light.

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